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ABSTRACT

Using data collected from kindergarten and second grade children in a study of young children's concepts about writing as reflected in their school writing behaviors, this report focuses on information gathered from second grade children. The introductory chapter restates the research questions guiding the study and briefly reviews the major conclusions drawn from the kidnergarten data presented in volume 1. The second chapter includes both a review of research relevant to the study of beginning writing in school and a review of the project's data collection techniques. This chapter also presents the case of Bonita, the least academically successful of the three second grade writers studied. By describing, first, the nature of school writing events and next, Bonita's variable behaviors across events, the chapter demonstrates her sensitivity to the social features of these events. The third chapter introduces Ayrio, one of Bonita's peers. By comparing Ayrio's behaviors to Bonita's, the chapter illustrates both similar dynamics at work and differences in their behaviors that appeared related to differences in their social lives within and outside the classroom. Specifically, Ayrio's case highlights the potential role of peers in writing growth. The fourth chapter focuses on Duranne, whose case highlights home influences. Again, by comparing Duranne's own behaviors across events and by comparing her behaviors to Bonita's and Ayrio's, the chapter demonstrates a child's sensitivity to writing as a social activity. The final chapter is a summary of the major conclusions of the study, including an overview of the kindergarten and the second grade data analysis. (HOD)

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Understanding the How's and Why's of Writing:

The Development of Children's Concepts of Writing in Primary Classrooms

Volume 2: The Second Grade Data

Anne Haas Dyson

The University of Georgia

Research report submitted to the National Council of Teachers of English Research Foundation, Fall 1984.

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[1]Kay E. Salter, research assistant for this project, is the first author of the Ayrio case study.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE SECOND GRADE VOLUME

Overview of the Second Grade Volume

The portraits of children learning to write in our elementary schools are generally not appealing ones. Children copy sentences and fill-in-the-blanks, learn their spelling words, and complete drills on capitalization, punctuation, and standard English usage (Goodlad, 1983; Graves, 1978). While many children complete their years of schooling without becoming proficient writers of varied types of prose, others (such as the present writer and, no doubt, many readers of this report) seem to fare the experience well. We have little data that allow us to examine schooling itself from the points of view of the teachers and children involved--and thus little understanding of the process by which children learn to perform school writing tasks or of teachers' and children's views of these tasks (how they are done, for whom, and why).

The purpose of this study was to examine the development of young children's concepts about writing (their understandings about the processes and functions of writing) as reflected in their school writing behaviors. Six young children, three kindergarteners and three second graders, were studied as they went about the daily writing tasks provided by their classrooms. These were "typical" classrooms, according to school administrators. The findings describe the everyday functioning of children in classrooms, yielding insight into the school's differential effect on children. In addition, the descriptions of children's behaviors may be familiar to many elementary teachers and, therefore, assist them in reflecting upon their ways of teaching and on the impact school activities may have on children.

This volume of the report focuses on the second grade data. In this introductory chapter, I restate the research questions guiding the study, briefly review the major conclusions drawn from the kindergarten data, and,

finally, outline the focus of coming chapters.

Research Questions

To clarify the specific research questions, I provide the following definitions of terms:

Writing is defined broadly as the production of letters or letter-like forms; it includes all behaviors occurring before and after, and related to, the physical act of writing. Thus, observing writing naturally involves observing children's talk and, in addition, any composing in other media (e.g., drawing, dramatic play) that is related to the production of a written product.

Concept of writing refers to children's understandings about the processes and functions of writing--how it works and what purposes it fulfills--as reflected in their writing behaviors and in how they talk about their writing.

Children's concepts of writing are formed as they encounter writing in varied social settings. Writing occasions, then, are those situations in which writing is integral to the nature of the ongoing social situation (adapted from Heath, 1982).

The specific research questions were:

What types of writing occasions occur in the observed classrooms? (The interest here is in the nature of both teacher-initiated and child-initiated occasions for writing, including the evident functions, forms, and intended audiences.)

What is the nature of children's concepts of writing as evidenced by their writing behaviors, specific characteristics of their written products, and by the ways they talk about their writing?

Is there a relationship between individual children's evident concepts of writing and the type of writing occasion? If so, what is the nature of that relationship?

How do children's concepts of writing in varied writing occasions differ across developmental levels of writing as suggested by earlier research (Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1983; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Graves, 1982)?

The Kindergarten Data: Conclusions

The kindergarten data suggested a link between research on literacy learning by preschoolers in the home and that focusing on literacy learning by school-age children in classrooms. In homes, children learn about the purposes of written language and the procedures one follows in using it as they observe or participate in varied occasions for literacy. In school, children continue to look for patterns in the ways writing occasions are conducted. Since children do not all have the same understandings of written language, they do not all interpret tasks (make decisions about what should be done when) in identical ways.

Different school tasks focus children's attention on different aspects of the writing process. For example, in the case of Dexter, copying tasks highlighted handwriting, while free writing tasks necessitated planning. School writing, then, may be performed in mechanical ways, without a consideration of the meaning of the text. In fact, if a child cannot grasp the underlying logic of a task, the child is, by default, dependent on observing the physical unfolding of that task; the child, in other words, must imitate the perceived surface structure, not grasping the underlying meaning.

As young children attempt to be successful in their tasks (do what they're "suppose' to do"), they may have difficulty separating their personal intentions for a particular activity from the given directions for that activity. Placing writing in a personal frame of reference can lead to unsuccessful school performance.

Finally, in completing school tasks, children's interactions with each other can affect the writing strategies they employ and, thus, the content of their final products.

The Second Grade Data: A Preview

The second grade analysis will continue the themes of the kindergarten data--the child's search for patterns (for knowing what exactly to do), the relationship between personal and school intentions for writing, the effect of peers on each others' writing. However, writing pervaded the curriculum in the second grade more so than it did in the kindergarten. Tasks such as copying words and filling in blanks no longer served to ease the children into writing but, rather, to assist the children in mastering or in displaying mastery of varied skills in reading, language arts, and other content areas. In addition, second graders themselves seemed more aware of the impersonal nature of school writing tasks and, at the same time, more aware of writing's usefulness within their own lives in school (but outside the boundaries of assigned tasks). Thus the second grade data, more so than kindergarten data, will highlight children's sensitivity to the shifting social contexts within which writing occurs.

Chapter 2, entitled "Writing as a Social Activity: A View from the Second Grade," includes a review of research relevant to the study of beginning writing in school and includes as well a review of the project's

data collection techniques. Chapter 2 also presents the case of Bonita, the least academically successful of the second grade writers. By describing, first, the nature of school writing events and, then, Bonita's variable behaviors across events, the chapter demonstrates her sensitivity to social features of these events (e.g., the initiator, controller, audience, and evaluator of writing).

Chapter 3, "Writing as a Social Activity: Highlighting Peer Influence," introduces Ayrio. By comparing Ayrio's own behaviors across events and, in addition, by comparing Ayrio's behaviors to Bonita's, the chapter demonstrates both similar dynamics at work (e.g., sensitivity to social features of writing events) and also differences in their behaviors that appeared related to differences in their social lives within and outside the classroom. Specifically, Ayrio's case highlights the potential role of peers in writing growth.

Chapter 4, "Writing as a Social Activity: The Serious Writer at Work," focuses on Duranne. Again, by comparing Duranne's own behaviors across events and by comparing her behaviors to Bonita's and Ayrio's, the chapter demonstrates her sensitivity to writing as a social activity and, also, how differences in children's behaviors may be related to differences in their social lives. While Ayrio's case highlights peer influences on writing, Duranne's highlights home influences.

The final chapter, "School Writing in the Primary Grades: Conclusions and Implications," is a summary of the major conclusions of the study, including an overview of both the kindergarten and the second grade data analysis. I offer a possible scenario, from the children's viewpoint, of the experience of learning to write in school and, finally, detail implications for future research and for current practice.

CHAPTER TWO

WRITING AS A SOCIAL ACTIVITY:

A VIEW FROM THE SECOND GRADE

Writing as a Social Activity:
A View from the Second Grade

How we suppose' to do this?

You on 15?

I'm on 14.

Now I'm on my last sentence.

Finished.

There's no question as to what's going on here. The children are doing their boardwork. They're copying sentences, filling in blanks, adding needed punctuation marks, dividing words into syllables, and on and on. This is a second grade classroom, and the children are writing.

Many children attend similar classrooms in which they carry out the traditional writing tasks of the elementary school (Cazden & Dickinson, 1981; Graves, 1978). The literature has provided descriptions of children's writing at home (Bissex, 1980), in researcher-structured tasks (Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Goelman, 1982), and in classrooms specifically designated as "facilitative" to writing growth (Graves, 1983). But there have not been extensive examinations of children in traditional school environments, engaged in tasks that the curriculum and teachers frequently view as literacy training. The purpose of this study was to examine the development of children's concepts of writing--their understandings of how writing works and the functions it serves--as reflected in their behaviors during varied school writing contexts.

The study was based on data gathered in a participant observation project that focused on primary grade children's writing behaviors in varied classroom literacy activities. I assumed both a constructionist view of the child as an active constructor of knowledge (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) and an

ethnographic view of the classroom as presenting unique contexts for learning (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Gilmore & Glatthorn, 1982). Specifically, I asked:

1. What types of writing occasions occur in the observed classroom? By occasions for writing are meant those situations in which writing is integral to the nature of the ongoing social situation (adapted from Heath, 1982).
2. What relationship exists between child- and teacher-initiated writing occasions? Are certain types of occasions exclusively teacher-initiated? child-initiated?
3. What is the nature of children's interpretations of these occasions as evidenced by their writing behaviors, specific characteristics of their written products, and by the ways they talk during and about the occasions? More specifically,
   a) Is there a relationship between individual children's writing behaviors and the type of writing occasion? If so, what is the nature of that relationship?
   b) Is there a relationship between individual children's interpretations of these occasions and their level of school writing skill?

This chapter focuses on one child's interpretations of school writing occasions.

Related Research

This study's focus on individual children's writing across varied school contexts is relatively unique. Previous research has tended to focus on individual children's writing or on the nature of literacy contexts.

Certain researchers have highlighted the activeness of children as they refine their understandings of writing over time. Graves (1983), for

example, examined children's writing process in a school environment considered facilitative. A central focus of his study was children's understandings of how writing works, specifically, of what writers must do to produce "good" writing. On the basis of his two-year project, he described children's concepts of writing as changing from an overriding concern with the mechanical aspects of writing (e.g., spelling) to a concern with organizing and presenting information on a topic to a wider audience. Graves' colleagues have elaborated on this trend, focusing on children's developing sense of drafting and revising processes and audience awareness (Calkins, 1980; Sowers, 1979).

Other researchers have focused on the nature of classroom contexts for writing. In a year long descriptive study in a second/third grade classroom, Florio and Clark (1982; Florio, et al., 1982) found that writing did not take place just during writing time, but served varying functions during the school day. For example, the children wrote class rules, kept a diary, wrote letters and cards, and completed workbook pages. Writing for different functions was characterized by different sociocognitive features, including the initiator of the writing, the composer, the actual writer, the intended audience, the format of the product, the ultimate fate of the product, and the presence or absence of an evaluation of that product.

Florio and Clark note that many assigned writing tasks restrict children from engaging in the whole writing process. For example, writing's format and much of its content might be provided by a commercial publisher, as in the workbook tasks. Further, these assigned but restrictive tasks may be the only writing evaluated by the teacher--it may "count" the most. Their findings lead to questions regarding the conceptions about writing functions being fostered in school.

Despite the value placed on certain assigned writing tasks, children may bring their own uses for writing into the classroom, finding time between assignments to engage in writing that is meaningful in their own world. As noted above, Florio and Clark (1982) have provided a general description of certain types of unofficial or child-initiated writing in a second/third grade classroom; Fiering (1981) has detailed the unofficial writing products found in a fifth grade classroom. To date, though, no study has systematically traced individual children's writing behaviors while writing across official and unofficial writing.

The purpose of the present study was to combine the concern with individual children's ways of writing with a concern for the varied contexts for writing present in a second grade classroom, one selected as "typical" by school administrators. Through the analysis of systematically collected qualitative data, including handwritten observations of behavior, audiotaped recordings of the children's and teacher's talk during writing, written products, and recorded responses to researcher-conducted interviews, I aimed to understand how the children and teacher made sense of writing in school.

Method

Site and Participants

The data for this report were collected in a self-contained, public school second grade in a southeastern city of the United States. The selected classroom had been identified by school administrators as socially, ethnically, and academically balanced. Diversity was considered essential to increasing the probability of identifying children of varying school writing skill levels. There were 30 class members, 16 girls and 14 boys; 15 children were Anglo, 12 were black, and 3 were Hispanic. The children's teacher was a middle-aged, female Anglo. The children were divided among three reading groups, organized

according to the teacher's perception of their ability, which, in turn, was influenced by their performance on the commercial tests accompanying the basal reading program. The three groups were reading in the 3^1 (third grade, 1st semester), the 2^2 (second grade, second semester), and the 2^1 (second grade, first semester) books. The high, average, and low reading groups had 8, 12, and 10 members respectively.

The classroom teacher's literacy curriculum centered on the basal reading program, the language arts text, boardwork to reinforce reading and language arts skills, and a ten minute sustained free reading or writing period, reading and writing alternating monthly.

Date Collection Procedures

In order to conserve space, I present here only a brief overview of data collection procedures as they were similar to those used in the kindergarten (see chapter 2 in volume 1 of this report).

I gathered data during a fourteen week period from February 9 to May 23, 1983 (eliminating the week of spring vacation). I observed in the classroom 2 to 5 times per week, each observation session lasting 1 to 2 hours.

Data collection proceeded through three phases. During the first (weeks 1-4), I familiarized myself with classroom routines, while the children and teacher accustomed themselves to me. Although I was initially an observer, by the fourth week, I was a participant observer; by then the children initiated interactions with me and, in fact, attempted to include me in prohibited behaviors (e.g., reading a joke book rather than completing their boardwork).

During this period, my focus was on the classroom as a whole. I observed primarily during the morning language arts/reading period. In addition, I observed the equivalent of two complete class days in order to sample the kinds of writing occasions that occurred in this classroom and, also, the

ways in which the classroom teacher modeled and talked about writing and reading; I took some notes during the observation, but complete field notes were composed immediately after the observation session ended. The writing occasions identified during this phase formed the basis for decisions during the next, the primary data collection phase, regarding when the case study children would be observed.

Also during the first phase, I selected three case study children, basing that selection on the teacher's recommendation of children she perceived as in the low, middle, and upper range of literacy development in her classroom and on my observations of the children's literacy behaviors in class as well as their written products. All selected children appeared comfortable and talkative with me. The child of interest in this chapter, Bonita, was judged to be at a relatively low level of writing skill.

Near the end of this first month, I interviewed the three children about their interest in and perceptions of the reasons for writing. Although I asked additional questions to probe or clarify a child's response, the questions relevant to this analysis were: Do you like to write? What do you have to do to write well? What kinds of things do you like to write? What kinds of things do you write at school? Do you write at home? What kinds of things do you write at home? What kinds of things do adults write?

The second phase (weeks 5-12) was the major data collection phase. I observed each case study child during at least two different types of writing occasions, resulting in 60 to 120 minutes of observation per child per week. By the end of this nine week period, I had observed each child for a minimum of 25 writing events (individual sessions in which the child wrote). In addition to taking observation notes, I audiotaped all observed writing events and collected samples of written products. After each observation session was

completed, I transferred my notes to an observation sheet. (A sample of the observation sheet, which I adapted from Graves, 1973, is included in the appendix). I also transcribed the audiotape and recorded all language addressed to or uttered by the child on the observation sheet as well.

Finally, in phase three (week 14), I interviewed each of the children about their written products. The questioning centered on their justified evaluations of their written products, which included samples collected across a range of types of writing occasions.

Throughout the data collection period, I talked informally with the classroom teacher. She provided information regarding her rationales for particular activities, her perceptions of the literacy skills primary grade children should master, and her judgments regarding her own students' academic progress.

Reliability of all data collected was assessed by comparing information gained from both different types of data (audiotape recordings, written products, observation sheets, assessment tasks, interview) and from the perspectives of different informants (children, teacher, myself as participant). In addition, a research assistant, a graduate student in language education, observed and audiotaped each child in at least two different types of writing occasions, for a minimum of one hour of observation per child. We compared our collected data and in all cases found that, within each occasion type, similar behaviors had been observed and that our observation sheets supported similar conclusions regarding the children's writing behaviors.

Results

Classroom Writing Occasions

The first question posed was, what types of writing occasions occur in the observed classroom? In this section I describe the writing occasions as

structured by the classroom teacher for the children. For purposes of the present analysis, I focus on the case study or phase 2 data.

I considered each time a child was observed for an entire type of writing occasion to represent one writing event. The definition of a writing event was identical to that used in Dyson (1983a). A writing event was defined as encompassing any verbal and nonverbal behaviors:

1. immediately preceding, and related to, the act of writing; sample behaviors include listening to the teacher explain the day's activity, gathering needed materials, discussing a planned letter, word, or phrase with peers, orally rehearsing that planned unit;

2. occurring after the child has begun the physical writing act; sample behaviors (beyond forming letters) include soliciting help, verbally monitoring letters as they are formed, rereading sentence or word written;

3. immediately following, and related to, the writing act; sample behaviors include drawing, reading the product, naming the letters written, soliciting approval, listening to the teacher read the class's collected products (writing event definition adapted from Graves', 1973, definition of a writing episode.)

I organized the observation sheets for all writing events into categories that matched the types of occasions for writing that occurred in this classroom. For the currently reported analysis, I used only those occasions that had occurred during the teacher's official reading/language arts period. The types, and the variations of each type, are described in Table 1. The classification of occasions reflects the teacher's perception of the nature of each task; the descriptions given, then, are based on the teacher's directions and comments.

[Insert Table 1]

The first major category, Composition, included two subcategories of writing occasions, free writing and constrained free writing. Free writing refers to the school-wide 10 minute writing period that began the school

Table 1

Nature of Observed Classroom Writing Occasions

Type	Description
COMPOSITION	Children write their own ideas; spelling however one can is encouraged.
Free Writing	For ten minutes, children write whatever they wish.
Constrained Free Writing	Children write whatever they wish on specified topic. No definitive time limit.
BOARDWORK	Children complete varied exercises designed to reinforce skills presented in language arts, spelling, handwriting, or reading lessons.
Language Arts Skills	
*Cursive Writing	
Copying letters	Children copy exactly what is written on the board.
Language	
Copying and editing	Children copy sentences from the board. They capitalize appropriate letters and add necessary punctuation marks.
Fill-in-the-blank (Usage)	Children copy sentences with missing words. Children select appropriate words from given sets to fill-in-the-blanks. Sentences highlight verb agreement.
Spelling	Children perform tasks focused on week's spelling words.
Copying words	
Copying/alphabetizing words	
Copying/analyzing words	Children select and copy particular words from spelling list (e.g., words with short a sound).
Composing sentence with each word	
Composing story with words	

Table 1 (continued)

Type	Description
Reading Skills	
Word Analysis/Dictionary Use	Children perform tasks focused on word recognition skills (e.g., copying words with a vowel digraph, copying and syllabicating words).
Fill-in-the-blank (reading)	
Copying/Analyzing Words (reading)	
Composing sentence with each given word	
Comprehension	Children perform tasks focused on understanding material longer than one sentence.
Copying and ordering sentences	
*Answering questions in sentences	

*These tasks were not observed during phase two.

day; the writing period alternated monthly with a ten minute sustained silent reading period. The teacher's goal here was to allow the children to freely express themselves. Ms. Kane, the teacher, did not give topic assignments, although, at the beginning of the school year, she had suggested that the children might write about what they had done the day before or what they planned to do in the future.

When children entered the classroom in the morning, they took out their paper and pencils and began writing. After ten minutes of silent writing, music came over the intercom. Most children then stopped writing, although a few continued on for several minutes. Ms. Kane asked which of the children would like to share their writing. She jotted down the names of the children who had raised their hands and then called on them, one by one, to stand in front of the class and read their work.

Beyond calling on the next child to share, Ms. Kane did not routinely respond to each child's writing: "OK. Next--Chris." She generally completed paperwork (e.g., attendance records, grading) during the sharing. Like the children, she responded nonlexically to humorous personal or imaginative stories by raising her head to look at the child reading while smiling or laughing; sometimes she turned and smiled at me when she apparently judged a child as using words in a particularly clever manner.

Ms. Kane did not respond formally to the children's writing. She did read through the week's free writing over the weekend, but she did not evaluate the work by writing comments on it or by conferencing with the children individually. Nonetheless, in May, she commented that she had noted progress in the children's free writing. She observed this progress in the children's sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and use of the "imagination." Ms. Kane reported that there were four "stages" evident in her children's

free writing: simply drawing, reporting on daily experiences, writing stories, and writing poems; although most of the children wrote about daily experiences, many, at least occasionally, composed stories or poems. Examination of the children's free writing products indicated that 6 of the 8 children in the teacher's "high" group, 9 of the 12 children in the "average" group, and 4 of the 10 children in the "low" group varied two or more times from the reporting pattern. Ms. Kane also noted that the children had become increasingly eager to share their writing with each other; she felt the sharing, particularly by the "imaginative" writers, assisted the children by providing models of "good" writing.

Constrained free writing occurred in rare instances when the teacher assigned the class or a particular reading group a writing topic. These constrained free writing events were responded to by the teacher in a manner similar to her response to the free writing events.

The second major writing category was Boardwork. Many of the tasks included in this category were similar to those observed in the kindergarten, for example, copying and fill-in-the-blank tasks. However, unlike the kindergarten tasks (see Volume 1), these tasks were not organized with the primary aim of developing the children's independent writing skills but, rather, of reinforcing the reading and language arts skills recently presented in the children's texts. Hence, the major subcategories of Boardwork occasions were language arts and reading skills occasions.

Despite its primary role of providing practice on specific skills, Ms. Kane did believe that boardwork contributed to the children's independent writing skill. She reported that her son and daughter, both adolescents, could not write because they had filled out too many dittos in elementary school; she stressed that her son could not do cursive. Thus, she had her

second grade students copy all the boardwork, not just the answer. Sometimes, she explained, the children had trouble copying exactly what was written on the board, and she had been working with them on that. She felt that careful copying would help them learn to spell and punctuate, as well as to form letters correctly. The children, she noted, could recite punctuation rules, but did not apply them. Copying would help them apply the rules.

Ms. Kane stressed the importance of careful copying each morning before she assigned the day's boardwork. She would read the names of the children who had done "Super" on their boardwork the day before. Super work was "neat, well-spaced. If you take your time, you can have [Super] papers like these." Other people "need to slow down. Some said things that were not sentences. Some, even after [the class] corrected the [copying-and-editing] work, did not get the sentences right with correct capitals." Then there was "the problem with scrunching all [the letters] at the end of the line."

When assigning the day's boardwork, Ms. Kane used the term "language" to refer to copying-and-editing tasks and to fill-in-the-blank tasks related to proper usage, "cursive" to refer to simple copying tasks, and "spelling" to refer to tasks involving the week's spelling words. While the whole class completed identical "language," "cursive," and "spelling" tasks, separate reading skills boardwork tasks were assigned to each of the three different reading groups.

After explaining the boardwork assignments, Ms. Kane allowed 15 to 20 minutes for the children to start their work. She then met approximately 30 to 45 minutes with each reading group; the children who were not meeting with Ms. Kane were to work quietly. When their boardwork was completed, the children could read library books or draw. In the afternoon, Ms. Kane discussed the morning's boardwork with the children, and they were to correct

their papers. On Fridays, Ms. Kane did not correct the work orally but collected it in order to check it herself over the weekend.

The third major writing category included Child-Initiated occasions. These occurred when the children had finished their boardwork or before the boardwork was assigned. Since the concern here is with the teacher's perception of classroom writing, Child-Initiated writing will not be discussed in this section of the report. While the teacher was aware that the children drew and wrote after completing their assignments, she did not attend in any way to their self-initiated writing, unless a particular child had not completed the assigned work. In that event, the child was advised to stop whatever he or she was doing and "finish."

One Child's Interpretation of School Writing Occasions

The major focus of this project was to describe children's interpretations of--ways of making sense of--school writing occasions. This section of the report focuses on the interpretations of one focal child, Bonita.

To organize the data for this case study, I began by reading through all field notes and observation sheets collected during the 14-week period, making notes in the margins on recurrent literacy behaviors. I next examined the phase two observation sheets, which were categorized according to classroom occasion type, to identify variations in the child's writing behaviors across type. In addition I examined Bonita's self-initiated writing events, identifying writing purposes and forms that occurred during unofficial (unassigned) versus official (assigned) writing events.

The focal child, Bonita, was a black female, whose speech contained many features of Vernacular Black English. She was 8 years, 1 month, at the beginning of this study. Bonita was in the lowest reading group of her second grade class; she read fluently from a 2^1 (second grade; first semester) textbook.

She had a small wiry build, big brown eyes, and hair arranged in two braids, usually secured with barrettes or ribbons to match her outfit.

Bonita was a quiet child, who did not seem to have any special friends in the class. Although attentive during group lessons, she frequently became fidgety when there was no manipulative activity (such as coloring or writing) during the lesson, as the following excerpt from fieldnotes illustrates:

> Ms. Kane is conducting a Weekly Reader lesson. She is talking very animatedly about a frozen baby elephant that was recently discovered. Bonita begins rolling up her Weekly Reader into a telescope-like shape. Then she turns to the back page and reads the cartoon audibly but softly. Bonita alternates between turning to the appropriate page of her Weekly Reader and such activities as squirming in her chair, rolling up her newspaper, and putting her pencil into her sock. [field notes edited for clarity]

Despite Bonita's behaviors, she apparently listened. She piped up now and then with an appropriate comment or a response to a teacher-posed question, speaking outloud but too softly for Ms. Kane to hear.

During independent work time, Bonita began her tasks promptly, but she frequently became confused about how exactly she was to proceed. She often commented to no one in particular, "I don't know how to do this" or "Them is hard." When puzzled, Bonita's usual coping strategy was to simply forge ahead, working quickly and putting <u>something</u> down on her paper. If the task was to be checked orally with the whole class, Bonita might simply choose to wait. She would then fill in answers as they were given.

Bonita appeared to be a child who wanted to do well in school; she promptly began her assigned work, proceeding quietly and seriously. Yet she also appeared aware that she often failed to do her work correctly. To

illustrate, when Ms. Kane read the names of children receiving "Super" on the boardwork completed the day before, Bonita always froze and listened. Her name, however, was never read, a major reason being her poor cursive handwriting. One day, after all the names had been read, Bonita commented to herself, "So?", before continuing with her work.

I chose Bonita for intensive study because (a) Ms. Kane regarded her as a below average writer for her classroom, (b) Bonita did, on the basis of my own observations, appear to be a relatively less sophisticated writer for her classroom, a judgment based primarily on her free writing samples (I considered structural features of her compositions [clarity of information, logicalness of organization], language used [varied sentence patterns, clarity of syntax], and mechanics), and (c) Bonita was comfortable and talkative with me.

Near the end of phase one, I talked with Bonita about her interest in and perceptions of the reasons for writing. She told me that she liked to write boardwork, stories, "something" to go with her drawings, and letters for her mother. Her mother, she explained, lived in a nearby metropolitan community; Bonita writes her that "I love her." I asked:

Dyson: Does anybody help you with your letters?

Bonita: Nobody--my aunty help me. My mama come down here every weekend because she come down to see me. She buy me stuff that I need so that she won't keep coming back down here, coming back down here.

Bonita reported that her most favorite writing was her boardwork as "school is more special to me that anything else. Cause my mama wants me to grow up and go to college." She explained that, to write well, one must "take your time; you gotta' make it be neat."

As for adults' uses of writing, Bonita felt that "they write work for the students if they're the teacher, and if they are um the employment office, they write stuff for people who need it."

In the following sections, Bonita's school writing will be closely examined. The initial insights Bonita offered about her writing, including the importance of boardwork, letters to her mother, and stories, will be affirmed.

Bonita's Writing Occasions

Bonita was observed for 25 writing events: 4 Composition events, 15 Boardwork events, and 6 Child-Initiated events. In addition, I collected Bonita's free writing and boardwork products weekly during phase 2. Bonita had a distinctively different approach to all free writing events, another for boardwork events, and yet another for those events she initiated herself.

Composition. During free writing events, Bonita consistently wrote about the pleasant experiences she had had or hoped to have after school or over the weekend. Bonita highlighted trips to the local shopping mall--to play video games and, maybe, to buy a new piece of clothing--eating special foods (potato chips, soda pop), and television watching; she also referred often to her aunt, with whom she lived, or visits to a nearby metropolitan community, where her mother worked. Bonita chronicled these recent or planned daily events, linking them with ands, and, on occasion, slipping from the "will" of the anticipated future to the accomplished past:

> Today I will go to my ant's house and spennd the night her name is lulu [this is not the aunt Bonita lives with] She is nise to me and she will take me to the store and she will by me a bag of potato chipes the will be barbeq potato chipes and After that we will go home and we will Look at Tv and I will eat potato chipes why I'm

looking at T.V. and at 8:00 I will look at the ducks of hazwerd and at 9.00 I will look at the night Rider and After that I will play.

I will go to Anquita house Friday But I don't want to spend the night Becaus I spose to go over my Grandfathers hous he and his wife is sweet to me They tak me Shopping on Saturdays They will take me Shopping This Saturday I will get some new E.t. Shoes They will be White and They Will be tenishoes and I will like Them So After That We Will go Eat Pizz at Pizza inn and After that we went home The End

Particularly persistent in Bonita's free writing products was her desire to buy shoes at the mall. Throughout the study, Bonita referred to the shoes she hoped to purchase. Although the nature of the hoped-for shoes changed, they were all described with detail:

Friday I will get me some new shose They are lik Brian shose They look Pretty to me my aun't will buy The They is call cuga that is a pretty name and . . .

In the final free writing sample collected, Bonita reported having gone to the mall to buy shoes, but she noted that she had not found what she had in mind:

I went to the mall and looked at they shoes and I decided
I din't want non From out there

In composing these papers, Bonita wrote fluently; she generally paused only briefly at the end of a sentence or clause, although she did occasionally stop to adjust a letter's form or to sound out a spelling. After such interruptions, she often reread, apparently to reestablish her line of thought. Bonita tended to vocalize words as she wrote them.

During free writing events, then, Bonita's concentration appeared to be primarily on her unfolding message, although she occasionally attended to spelling and handwriting. Bonita did not evidence a concern with capitalization and punctuation. The only punctuation mark used was an occasional period at the end of her product. Bonita did not capitalize at the beginning of sentences, but she did capitalize names of people and cities. She occasionally capitalized other words as well, perhaps simply because a particular letter was more automatically formed in upper-, rather than lower-, case form; for example, she tended to use upper- rather than lower-case a's and t's at the beginning of words.

When the ten minute free writing period was up, Bonita consistently raised her hand when Ms. Kane asked who wanted to read their piece to the class. While reading, Bonita seldom received an observable response from her classmates. The children did not generally focus on Bonita as she read, nor did Ms. Kane. There were no nonverbal or verbal responses evident. In turn, Bonita did not attend noticeably when others read. Nonetheless, Bonita did want to share her writing.

Perhaps Bonita's recounting while writing of what she perceived as pleasant experiences was a way of presenting herself positively to her peers. Certainly that is speculation, but Bonita did appear to take sharing seriously. She would stand somberly in front of the class, reading her paper in a quiet, even voice. In one event, Bonita stumbled through a sentence when reading; although the class did not respond in an observable manner, Bonita immediately stopped, returned quickly to her desk, and put her head down in tears.

Constrained free writing events occurred infrequently; during the study, only two such events were noted. Bonita's behaviors during these events appeared similar to those occuring during free writing. Bonita wrote fluently

pausing only briefly at sentence or phrase units. In these events too, Bonita appeared to focus on meaning, rather then mechanics, and she again followed a set pattern. To elaborate, recall that during the morning free writing period, Bonita consistently followed a tell-what's-happening pattern. In constrained free writing events, Bonita had a pattern set by the teacher: in one, to list what she would do in the summer; in the other, to suggest what Alexander in The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (Viorst, 1972) might do to ensure a good day.

The latter event, writing a supportive letter to Alexander, established links between free writing and constrained free writing events. The themes of Bonita's letter to Alexander are themes of her free writing events put into a different format established by her teacher, a letter format. Her "I will's", though, are now intermingled with "you need's":

> Dear Alexander
>
> I will tell you how you can have a good day I will start you need to go to the mall today to buy you some shoes and I got a lot to tell you about your foot because your father smash your foot in the door and about in the cerarl you ned to as you brother to sher and you ake yor daddy could you play with his tip rider and you ned to ab good for your dad so he can buy you lots of stuff I now wher [your] brothers agavat you som times But you'll [you all] shont agavat each other and yor friend agavat you to I will Right again

Boardwork. Bonita's behavior during Boardwork was distinctly different from that during Composition. Most noticeably, her writing flowed less fluently, punctuated with lengthy pauses. These pauses were related, in part, to the variety of tasks subsumed under the "boardwork" label; there was not an assumed pattern, as there was during the free writing events.

Thus, Bonita spent time while beginning her boardwork, and then intermittently throughout her work, to figure out what exactly she was "suppose' to do."

Bonita's comments as she worked reflected her concern with understanding directions. By "directions" I refer not only to procedures directly related to a specific task (Was one to underline specified vowel patterns in a given word or to write another word with a similar pattern?), but also to the entire procedure of completing the boardwork (Where should one go if one runs out of room--to the back of the page? to any empty space on the side of the page one is working on?). Intermittently throughout boardwork, Bonita focused on the item number she was on and how many items remained to be done. In addition to her focus on uncovering the pattern of each task, page arrangement, and the amount of work completed or to be completed, Bonita also evidenced concern with her own performance, a concern not evident in Composition tasks ("I'm mixed up."). Varied concerns are illustrated in the following summarized segment of a copying-and-editing event:

> Bonita is completing a copying-and-editing task consisting of 10 sentences. She has just finished copying 9 sentences from the board. She remarks, "I could do number 10, and I'll be finished. Then I gotta put commas, periods, and question marks." After attempting to erase some "spots" on her paper, Bonita returns to her first sentence, commenting, "some of 'em have commas. Ms. Kane said some of 'em have commas but not all of 'em." Bonita then adds quotation marks around her first sentence:
>
> "Betty will go to school with me."
>
> She explains, "Commas right here [pointing] and commas right there [pointing] 'cause Betty said she'll go to school with me." And so

Bonita proceeds, having the label for commas confused with that for quotation marks, she recalls and attempts to apply the rule for each sentence:

"Grace gave the book to me."

"I live in athens georgia."

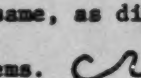
Although this is a copying-and-editing task, the concern with punctuation and capitalization was evident throughout all Boardwork tasks, contrasting sharply its absence during Composition tasks. Ms. Kane, as noted previously, announced daily who had completed their boardwork neatly with correct capitals and punctuation marks--and Bonita appeared sensitive to her teacher's wishes. Bonita would intermittently evidence her concern even when completing tasks in which such concerns were irrelevant, such as writing isolated words:

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		Bonita is doing her spelling boardwork. She reads the board:
	OV	"'Find the spelling word that begins like a) ball, b) mom, c) cat, and d) pig'"
	OV	"Ball--that'd be barn."
	P	Bonita scans her spelling book, locating barn.
a) Barn	S	
	OV	"That have to be a capital."
	IU-R	Dyson: "Why?"
		Bonita: "Cause it's at the beginning of the sentence."
	P	Bonita glanced at the board and then scans her spelling book again.
march	S	Bonita writes march next to barn.
	OV	"Now this don't have to be a capital right her." (Bonita's reasoning here seems to be that march is not the first word; thus it does not need to be capitalized.)

KEY: Dialogue: IU-R - Interruption Unsolicited from Researcher; Monologue: OV - Overt language; Other: S - Silence; P - Pause.

In the preceding event, Bonita appeared to include as a sentence two or more single words written as a response to a numbered item; she did not, though, consistently use capital letters and/or periods when writing a series of words--her inconsistency suggested that she was grappling with the sentence concept. Compare Bonita's behavior in the following two event excerpts:

> Bonita is to add ed and ing to march. She is initially confused about this: "Add both of 'em at the same time?" After rereading the directions, Bonita comments, "Write two march. One of 'em need to be capital." She then writes Marching marched.
>
> Bonita must write two sentences using took, one for item #11, another for item #12. She writes, I tool my hair alos [aloose]. and I took off on my bike. I note that, in this situation, Bonita adds periods. Bonita examines her work, remarking "This sentence go by itself [running a finger over sentence #11] and this sentence go by itself [running a finger over #12.]"

Regarding other aspects of mechanics, Bonita occasionally demonstrated a concern with cursive writing. Beginning in April, she used cursive writing during Boardwork, as opposed to the italic manuscript she used during Composition tasks. Bonita had great difficulty with cursive writing. Her b, f, and l looked the same, as did d and cl, m and n. Connections between letters were also problems.  , for example, is arm; is barn; and is far. Ms. Kane offered written comments and support on Bonita's daily boardwork; "Keep practicing cursive writing every day. You can do it." But Bonita did not regularly evidence a concern with particular cursive letters. Occasionally she consulted the cursive writing samples at the front of her spelling book to see if a letter had

been formed correctly, erased and reformed a letter, or talked herself through a letter's formation: (Bonita was trying to make a w.) "Go up, make a curve, go up, make a curve."

Spelling was an aspect of mechanics that was only rarely of concern, as Bonita was primarily copying.

To recap, during Boardwork events, Bonita's major concern was to identify and follow appropriate procedures--the directions--for the varied tasks. Intermittently she evidenced a concern with capitalization and punctuation before or after the physical act of writing. Only occasionally did she attend in an observable manner to her cursive writing. Perhaps her overriding concerns with procedural matters while actually writing precluded attention to cursive forms. In this regard, note that the concern with capitalization and punctuation came before or, more typically, after the item or whole task was completed.

To this point, I have not mentioned a focus on text meaning, Bonita's predominant focus during Composition. In Boardwork, Bonita evidenced some focus on meaning during tasks involving sentence units: copying-and-editing, filling-in-the-blanks, composing sentences for given words, copying-and-ordering sentences. In the latter three tasks, Bonita would reread her sentence to fill in the blank or to orient herself to where she was in the sentence. Occasionally she reread at the completion of a sentence, apparently to achieve a sense of closure or at times, perhaps, to simply enjoy what she had written.

Of these sentence tasks, the only one involving the forming of her own meaning was composing sentences with given words. In general, Bonita focused on coming up with a sentence--any sentence. The following examples are illustrative: I did it., did you do it., A barn is fun. you can tell dogs aprt [apart]. In one instance, the sentence she composed led to an oral

elaboration of the personal experience behind it. (This narrating to me was atypical as Bonita generally made few if any acknowledgements of my presence):

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	P	Bonita is looking in the spelling book at the next "barnyard" word.
		Bonita orally monitors words as she she writes them:
	OV	"I"
	OV	"hurt"
	OV	" my"
	OV	"arm"
	RR	"I hurt my arm."
	IS-R	"I hurt my arm. It was real bad. I did it Friday, and I took skin off. When I was riding my bike, it fell off. It was already gonna come off so I did it [removed scab?]."

KEY: Dialogue: IS-R - Interruption Solicited from Researcher.
Monologue: OV - Overt language; RR - Reread;
Other: P - Pause.

Child-Initiated Occasions. Bonita, as a member of the lowest reading group, had less opportunity for child-initiated writing during the morning than did the other two focal children. Ms. Kane hoped to help her reading group "catch up": by meeting with them for a longer period of time than she did the other two groups, she planned to complete the 2^1 reader and get them started on the 2^2.

When Bonita did finish her boardwork, she drew, sorted through the materials in her desk, and, occasionally, wrote. On her own, Bonita

wrote in ways not included in her assigned work.

The forms of Bonita's self-initiated writing varied; she produced letters to her mother, stories, labels for storage devices (e.g., containers for her pencils), an envelope addressed to a teacher (contents unknown), cursive-like loops. These forms were different from those produced during official writing occasions. Certain children in Bonita's room did do imaginative writing during the morning free writing period, but Bonita did not. The children were not asked to produce storage devices or envelopes. The children were directed on one occasion to write a letter, though, and did practice cursive forms.

The difference between assigned and Child-Initiated writing was not simply that Child-Initiated included more forms. The purposes guiding the use of these forms varied. In academic work, Bonita wrote to complete her assigned work successfully and, during free writing, to report her past or hoped-for personal experiences for herself and, perhaps, for her peers as well. In Child-Initiated writing, she wrote to create imaginary experiences, to interact with her mother, to fulfill practical needs, and to play with, and perhaps experience, control of the medium itself (i.e., writing cursive-like forms).

Not only did new purposes emerge, but new writing behaviors did as well. To elaborate on these behaviors, I turn first to letter writing and, then, to story writing.

Unlike assigned writing, including the assigned letter to Alexander, Bonita's letters were intended for someone other than her teacher. Further, during letter writing, Bonita appeared to focus on meaning, as she did during Composition tasks. Yet, at the same time, she also appeared concerned with her performance, as she had during Boardwork tasks, although

the standards to be met were different.

In the interview in phase one, Bonita had mentioned writing to her mother and, in fact, had credited her desire to do well in her boardwork to her wish to please her mother. Her letters, then, must also please her mother. And, to please her mother, letters not only had to be reasonably neat, they had to "sound good."

One morning, during the transition between the reading period and a Weekly Reader lesson, Bonita began a letter to her mother. Fluently, she printed:

To my mother from her dahter.

I love my mother she makes me feel
good she is nice to me and she
gives

Ms. Kane then directed the children's attention to the first page of the Weekly Reader and Bonita put her letter down, remarking to me, "I gotta send it in the night." As a child read the opening article, Bonita fidgited in her chair. She turned to the joke in the back of her newspaper and, after reading it, returned to the appropriate page. After reading along for a few minutes, she looked at her letter and added "me." Then Bonita pulled a folder from her desk, placed the letter in it, shoved the folder back in the desk, and again picked up her Weekly Reader. Later, Bonita pulled the letter out again, looked it over, and then began wadding it up: "I done it wrong. It don't sound right." I asked her what the trouble was, and she replied, "Cuz right here," and then read her letter. I wanted to pursue this line of discussion, but Ms. Kane was talking and I (if not Bonita) was worried about getting into trouble.

After the lesson was over, Bonita explained that "my mother tell me [if] the letter sound good and be neat." I asked:

Dyson: She says it sounds good and it's neat?

Bonita: No, she never say it be neat. She say it OK.

As Ms. Kane never mentioned "sounding good," that criterion appeared to come from her mother.

In letter writing, then, Bonita wrote fluently as she did during Composition events, without the pauses evident during Boardwork. In letter writing, also as in Composition tasks, Bonita appeared to have a pattern for writing--there was no need to struggle over what to do. In both letters I observed Bonita write, her message was "I love my mother." Her further comments in the above event were similar to her statements about others during free writing events--like her mother, her aunts and grandfather were nice to her and gave her things. Her letters, in fact, seemed more personal statements than letters. Finally, in letter writing, as in Composition events, Bonita did not appear concerned with spelling or capitalization and punctuation, although she did form her letters more carefully than in the latter events.

In contrast to Composition events, however, Bonita appeared to evaluate her performance, as she did during Boardwork. But, while her concerns during Boardwork appeared to center on whether or not she was following the directions correctly, in letter writing she appeared to focus on broader, less specific standards. That is, the criteria were not the correct procedures or aspects of mechanics required by Ms. Kane, but the "sounding good" and "looking good" she perceived as desired by her mother in her letters.

In story writing events, Bonita also appeared to blend the meaning focus of Composition tasks with the self-evaluative stance taken during Boardwork. As previously noted, Bonita did not often have time for self-initiated writing, should she have wanted to do so. But one day, Ms. Kane

was absent and so Bonita had fewer assignments. When she had completed her Boardwork, Bonita sat down with notebook paper, pencil and crayons at a table in the back of her classroom and wrote five stories in a row. The topics of her stories were similar to those of her free writing pieces--eating, going shopping, the importance of money, wanting things but not being able to have them. Here, though, the characters were other than herself and her family. Her stories had a consistent pattern or structure; they began with an introduction of the central character, a statement about the character, and then a problem was noted--but the problem did not necessarily resolve itself in the story.

Bonita's behaviors while writing were similar, in certain ways, to those occurring during free writing: she wrote fluently, vocalizing words, occasionally rereading or sounding out a spelling; the only punctuation was a period at the end of one product. However, Bonita evidenced different behaviors as well. She talked about her work, as she did during Boardwork events. Bonita preceded the actual writing of her story with comments about what she planned to do; the comments were related to the story's anticipated length or to its general topic. In addition, Bonita commented on her work when the story was finished; her remarks often evaluated her stories in a positive way ("I did mine the way they oughta be.") These behaviors are illustrated in the following excerpt from Bonita's observation sheets:

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	OV	I'm gonna' make this a long story.
On	S	
	P	
day it was this little girl her name was r	S	

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	///	Bonita erases the r.
sindy	S	
	RR	"One day it was this little girl. Her name was Cindy."
she	OV	"She
likes	OV	likes
to	OV	to
play	OV	play"
	RR	"She likes to play--"
a	OV	"a
late	OV	a lot.
she play with her	OV	She play with her
dolls	OV	dolls.
she	OV	She
and	OV	and
her	OV	her
mother	OV	mother
go	OV	go
to	OV	to
the	OV	the
gro	OV	grocery"
	///	Bonita erases "gro".
	OV	"Let me write grocery."
	OV	"C"
grocery	OV	"gro cer y."

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	RR	"One day it was this little girl. Her name was Cindy. She likes to play alot. She play with her dolls. She and her mother go to the grocery--"
every	OV	" every
day	OV	day
but	OV	but
her	OV	her
mother	OV	mother mother
know	OV	no
don't	OV	don't
got	OV	got
	RR	don't got
no	OV	no
	///	Bonita erases no.
know	OV	no
more	OV	more
money	OV	money"

KEY: Monologue: OV - Overt language; RR - Reread. Other: S - Silence; P - Pause; /// - Erase.

And on she continued in this manner, vocalizing words, rereading, and occasionally demonstrating a concern with a spelling. Her completed product read as follows:

> On day it was this little girl her name was sindy she likes to play alate she play with her dolls she and her mother go to the grocery

every day but her mother know don't got know more money she said mother mother we have not got know more money she went into her room she cried because she had know more money here go a pictor of her mother and little girl

---

here They go.

(drawing of girl and mother)

Upon finishing a story, Bonita drew a picture. She commented continuously while drawing, noting not only her planned object, but her critical evaluations of her efforts--which, if negative, always led to adjustments. She also elaborated on the story's meanings, adding details about characters or plot or simply referring to her own related experiences. Following are Bonita's comments during the drawing for the above story (ellipsis indicate a pause):

That dress . . . Right there's the dress. When she be cooking she has to put on her wrap so food won't drop on her dress . . . Here's her mama right here. Her mama's gonna have a dress . . . Better hurry up . . . I didn't put no mouth . . . no arms--I forget all about those . . . My mama don't wear those when she cooks, ' cause she don't spill nothing.

Similar behaviors were seen in the production of a "nasty" story about a finger that danced all the way to California, the fourth story in the series Bonita was writing. However, new behaviors emerged--<u>rereading</u> at the end of the production that led to additional content (<u>revising</u>) and <u>editing</u> (adding omitted words, reworking spellings). In addition, this was the first observed product in which Bonita made explicit reference to a potential audience. Excerpts from the observation sheets for that event follow:

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	OV	"This one gonna be a short one right here." (Bonita does not look at me as she speaks; she appears to be talking to herself as much as to me.)
it was this finger it dance all the way to callafonga	S	Bonita is writing silently, although her lips are moving.
	OV	"This one gonna be a joke right here. All I gotta do is put a funny thing here and that's all. I be finished and I be--"
	RR	"It was this finger. It dance all the way to California."
and	OV	"and
eat	OV	eat
any	OV	an any
thing	OV	thing" (laughs)
you	OV	"you
give	OV	give
it	OV	it"
	IS-R	"It nasty."
	IS-R	"I did mine the way they oughta' be." (Bonita is referring here to her stories.)
	OV	"Here they go. Here they go. Here the picture. Here--" (Bonita decides not to begin drawing but, rather, to reread her piece.)
	RR/PR	"It was this finger. It dance all the way to California, and it eat--"
it	PR	Bonita adds <u>it</u> before <u>eat</u>.
A	PR	"it ate" (Bonita writes an <u>A</u> over the <u>e</u> on <u>eat</u>, changing the word from present to past tense.)

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	PR	"all the way to California and it ate any--"
	///	Bonita erases any.
Enay	OV	"ate any"
	RR	"thing you give it"
will	OV	"It will
eat	OV	eat
you	OV	you
if	OV	if
you	OV	you
pick	OV	pick
over	OV	over over
his	OV	his
food	OV	food
he	OV	he
will	OV	will
bite	OV	bite bite
you	OV	you
I	OV	I I
will	OV	will
show	OV	show
you	OV	you
how	OV	how
it	OV	it
looks	OV	looks" [Note the reference to a potential audience here: "I will show you how it looks."]

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Comments
	DR	Bonita now begins to draw two fingers.
	OV	"They long, long, long and bony. They eat, but they get bony and bony."
	OV	"This lady right here--she fat (laughs)."

KEY: Dialogue: IS-R - Interruption Solicited from Researcher. Monologue: OV - Overt Language; RR - Reread; PR - Proofread (make a change in text). Other: S - Silence; P - Pause; /// - Erasing; DR - Drawing.

The preceding event revealed that the changes in Bonita's writing behaviors were accompanied by social and affective changes as well. As previously noted, between stories Bonita commented positively on her work. In addition, just before beginning the "finger" story, Bonita had encouraged Kori, a quiet child also in the low reading group, to sit down and write too:

> Kori has finished her boardwork and, on her way back from a trip to the restroom, passes by the table where Bonita is working. Kori stops and looks at Bonita as she counts her completed stories:
>
> Bonita: I did four stories. You want to do some?
>
> Kori: I don't care. (Kori smiles.)
>
> Bonita returns to her desk to get some paper for Kori. When she arrives back at the table, she explains to Kori:
>
> Bonita: You can do any kinda story you want--story 'bout this lady and this little girl, any kind.
>
> Kori now begins to write stories as well.

Bonita, then, demonstrated an "I can do this" attitude about her writing and in fact encouraged another that she too could "do this." The rereading

of the "finger" story took place in the context, not only of child-control of writing topic and genre, but also of a child feeling in control or command of the process itself: "I did mine the way they oughta' be." And during the rereading, Bonita made the first observed changes or additions to a piece of self-composed (as opposed to copied) discourse initially perceived as "finished."

Further examples of the interweaving of affective, social, and writing behaviors came after the production of Bonita's final story. As she was drawing, George stopped by her table; George was another child from the low reading group and a class "behavior problem" (given to wandering around the room, chatting, and squirming).

George: Those [stories] all yours?

Bonita: Uh huh [yes]. You can read 'em if you want to.

George: (begins reading a story) "It was this dog. He had no home. He cried. He had no food. [And so George read to the end of Bonita's story.] He cried and cried and to [until] he cannot, can't--?"

(to Dyson) What's this [word]?

Dyson: "can't"

George: "can't cry no more. Here go a--picture, picture."

Bonita had stopped drawing and observed George as he struggled with the word picture. She took her story from George, reread the last sentence and changed piotor, her original spelling, to pictor.

After George completed reading her stories, she put them in chronological order (which she referred to as "alphabetic order"). She decided that she would staple her stories together and, then, read them all again. Bonita walked over to the teacher's desk to get a stapler and, while she was there,

had the substitute teacher read all her stories. Unfortunately, the substitute teacher said she could not give Bonita the stapler.

Upon returning to her table, Bonita reread her first story and, as she read, she made further changes in her text. The changes made are indicated below:

Original Text	Change
she likes to play a late	she likes to play a lot
she and her mother go	she and her mother went
to the grocery every day	to the grocery store every day

And then the morning language arts period was over. Bonita returned to her desk, stories in hand.

Bonita, then, evidenced pride in her completed work and sought out audiences for her stories. She listened to others reading her pieces and reread them herself, apparently out of a feeling of satisfaction with and enjoyment of her efforts. These rereadings led to changes in her product--changes not demanded by anyone but herself. These changes included more careful spellings, adding omitted words, and, in one case, changing the tense of a verb, making the story more consistently in the past.

Summary. Bonita perceived the demands of Composition, Boardwork, and Child-Initiated writing differently and thus approached each differently. In all tasks, however, Bonita operated within, or sought to find, a pattern--a familiar format within which to write.

In Composition tasks, which were primarily free writing events, Bonita focused on her evolving meaning, attending occasionally to spelling or handwriting concerns. Following her teacher's suggestion regarding "what to write about," she followed a chronological pattern and related her anticipated or past afterschool and weekend experiences. If the composer of a piece is

defined as one who determines its form and content, Bonita shared the composing (the control) of these pieces with her teacher. Bonita appeared to value sharing her work with her teacher and classmates. There was no formal evaluation of Composition products, and Bonita did not appear aware of the informal response of others during sharing.

In Boardwork, there was not a consistent pattern to be followed. Further, Bonita was usually not the controller (the composer) of the writing's form and content. Her concern, therefore, was to understand how to do each task. Her search for directions was often punctuated with self-evaluative comments, revealing her confusion and her desire to meet her teacher's expectations. Bonita evidenced a consistent concern with capitalization and punctuation during Boardwork, which focus made sense in the light of her teacher's directions and evaluative feedback. So, although her teacher formally evaluated these products, Bonita informally evaluated them as she completed them.

Child-Initiated writing introduced new forms and new purposes for writing. Most notably, Bonita wrote to interact with a significant other and to create imaginary experiences or "stories." In these events, Bonita was the sole composer. While writing, her behaviors were similar to those observed during Composition; she appeared to focus primarily on meaning. However, in story writing, Bonita made comments regarding the content and length of her planned piece, both before actually writing and afterward while drawing. These behaviors were not evidenced during Composition events. The new behaviors may have been related to Bonita's greater content options in story writing--although her stories followed a consistent pattern, her content varied.

Child-Initiated events were similar to Composition events in being meaning-focused, but they were similar to Boardwork events in that they included self-evaluation. Bonita's standards, though, were broad, involving both how her work "sounded" and how it "looked" and, in addition, were

frequently positive in nature.

Unlike both Boardwork and Composition events, during Child-Initiated writing Bonita had to actively solicit or encourage potential readers of her work. Her pride in her own work and her observations of the responses of others to her stories appeared to lead to frequent rereadings and, notably, the only observed instances in which Bonita made changes in her completed work. The changes appeared to have to do, not only with the aforementioned standards, but also with the readability of her efforts. In this sense, her peers could serve as informal evaluators of her work.

Table 2 summarizes the observed differences in Bonita's writing occasions.

[Insert Table 2]

Bonita's final interview. In the last week of data collection, I interviewed Bonita about varied samples of her writing, including those resulting from Composition, Boardwork, and Child-Initiated writing events. I asked her if each sample was "good" and why it was good. In addition, I questioned her about the reasons behind her own and other's writing, just as was done in the initial interview.

Bonita evaluated the Composition products (two free writing papers) as "good." Her evaluation appeared to be based on the content of the pieces; she explained that the products were good " 'cause I did all this stuff"--that is, she had actually experienced the reported events. Her evaluation thus complemented the observational data, which had suggested that Bonita's focus during free writing events was on her evolving meaning.

Bonita evaluated her Boardwork products positively also, but the basis for her evaluation was different. The Boardwork products evaluated included two copying-and-analyzing-words tasks, a fill-in-the-blank task, a copying-

Table 2

Characteristics of Bonita's Classroom Writing Occasions

Characteristic	Occasion Type			
	COMPOSITION	BOARDWORK	CHILD-INITIATED	
			letters	stories
Initiator	teacher	teacher	Bonita	
Composer - major controller of				
(a) pattern	teacher and Bonita	teacher	Bonita	
(b) content		teacher	Bonita	
Audience	peers teacher	teacher	mother	Bonita peers teacher
Discourse form	personal narrative	words and sentences	non-narrative/ personal statements	imaginative narratives
Evaluator	no formal evaluator	teacher as formal evaluator; Bonita as informal evaluator	mother as formal evaluator; Bonita as informal evaluator	no formal evaluator; Bonita and peers as informal evaluators
Writing Behaviors	fluent writing; oral sharing of piece	puzzling out of directions; primarily negative self-evaluative comments; concern with capitalization and punctuation	fluent writing; self-evaluative comments	fluent writing; primarily positive self-evaluative comments; verbal planning of content and length; drawing; verbal elaboration of content during drawing; editing; revising; seeking out of an audience

and-editing task, and a composing-sentences-for-words task. Bonita explained that the first four papers were good because "I think good"; in other words, she had completed the tasks correctly. Bonita also explained that the completed papers "look good and my handwriting is getting better." Her responses were consistent with the apparent concern during observed Boardwork events with completing each task appropriately. Bonita, however, had evidenced only an occasional overt concern with the appearance of her product; she had attended carefully to capitalization and punctuation, though, which concern she did not explicitly mention during the interview. Perhaps correctly inserting punctuation marks and capital letters was part of "thinking good"--getting the task done right. When I asked about the final Boardwork product, a composing-sentences task, Bonita spontaneously read her sentences out loud. This product contained the earlier discussed sentences, "I took my hair aloose" and " I took off on my bike." Bonita explained that the paper was good because "it sound good and it look good"--she liked the sound of her sentences and, in addition, their appearance was pleasing. Bonita had occasionally evidenced a similar pleasure with her completed sentences during the observed writing events.

The Child-Initiated tasks included a letter to Bonita's mother and an imaginative story. In discussing the letter, Bonita recalled her earlier reported comment that the letter didn't "sound good." She could not explain why the letter did not sound good; however, she did report that she had sent her mother a commercial card rather than the rejected letter. Bonita evaluated her story as good because "I know how to draw." Bonita had appeared to focus on the meaning of her story while writing, but she had also evidenced involvement with the accompanying drawings. In fact, her most extensive comments on the story's characters and plot had occurred during the drawing. During the

interview, then, the drawing apparently claimed Bonita's full attention, she did not make any evaluative comments about her writing.

In our discussion about the reasons for writing, I explicitly asked Bonita about her writing at home. She reported that, at home, she made pictures for her wall, wrote letters to her mother, and occasionally copied stories from books. When asked about the reasons for adult writing, Bonita responded as she had in the first interview with references to the daily functional uses of writing. Bonita explained that adults wrote letters to friends and to people in the hospital and that they wrote to "fill out stuff like when they are paying bills."

In general, the interview data supported the observational data in suggesting Bonita's differing concerns across occasion types. Bonita did not, however, allude to her apparent desire for an audience for her efforts, a desire suggested by the observational data. When I asked Bonita who each piece was for, she said that, except for the letter for her mother, all the products were for herself " 'cause they got Bonita on it."

Discussion

The major question guiding this project was, "How are children's concepts of writing (their understandings about the processes and functions of writing) reflected in the diverse contexts of the primary grade classroom. Bonita's case study has allowed insight into a child's efforts to be a "good" writer in varied literacy contexts. While certainly Bonita is but one child, her case yields new ways of conceptualizing or thinking about the process of learning to write in school. When corroborated by the findings of other studies, the strength of the conceptualizational is augmented (McCutcheon, 1981).

The first conceptualization concerns the nature of school writing activities as social events. To assist children in becoming effective writers,

Bonita's teacher had planned two basic types of activities; "Composition" tasks, which allowed children the opportunity to express themselves, and "Boardwork" tasks, which reinforced taught skills, including handwriting, capitalization and punctuation, spelling, and correct usage.

Bonita was sensitive to the differing nature of these tasks. Yet, simply conceiving of the tasks as having differing teacher objectives did not provide an adequate framework within which to understand her behaviors. Further, Bonita had her own purposes for writing--purposes that did not necessarily overlap with those of her teacher. In the course of analyzing her writing events, concepts such as the initiator of the event, the expected form and content of the writing, the controller or composer of that form and content, the audience for the product, and the evaluator of the product became important. In other words, school writing was not just the completion of tasks designed to reach objectives--it was a social affair realized in varied literacy events.

To elaborate, the concept of a literacy event is derived from Hymes (1972) concept of a speech event as an occasion structured by a way of using speech, for example, a debate, a quarrel, a casual conversation, a classroom lesson. Literacy events, like speech events, involve the participants in their varied roles (at least a producer and a recipient of a message), the form of the message, the topic, the intended purpose or function, and the physical setting in which the message is produced or read (Basso, 1974).

Florio et al. (1982), whose work was reviewed earlier, described classroom literacy as residing in a "complex of social and cognitive features including roles, expressive intentions, resources for communication, and outcomes of communication" (p. 12). This study builds on their work by providing close descriptions of a child's writing behaviors, demonstrating the

impact of changes in the nature of literacy events on her behaviors. So, the second major conceptualization or theme of this study is that variations in features of writing events effect changes in child writing behaviors.

One significant feature of these events is the controller of the pattern (form) and the topic of the writing. Consistent with developmental research not only on the writing process (Bartlett, 1981), but also on drawing (Goodnow, 1977), oral language (Slobin, 1979), and classroom interaction (Mason & Au, 1984), Bonita searched for comfortable patterns--for the security of knowing what exactly she was to do. In this sense her behaviors were consistent with those of the kindergarteners studied in this project (see volume 1), who also were sensitive to the procedural and language patterns of varied writing occasions.

When the writing pattern was known, as in Composition and Child-Initiated events, Bonita was free to concentrate on her evolving content. And in doing so, consistent themes emerged--being with people who were "nice to me," eating special foods and going special places, wanting things but not always being able to have them. In her molding of that content in her free writing and in her stories and letters, Bonita seemed to be learning to form her thinking for different purposes.

The audience is another feature of Bonita's writing events. Sharing her work with others appeared to be a valued aspect of writing. Particularly important for understanding Bonita's behaviors was the relationship between the audience and the evaluator of her writing. By evaluator is meant the person or persons who have expectations--criteria--for judging one's work.

The concept of evaluation is not present in Hymes (1972) discussion of speech events, perhaps because evaluation is implicit in any conversation. In communicating, each speaker contributes to a joint production in a clear

and relevant way; partners evaluate each other's contribution (Grice, 1975). If the needed mutual cooperation is violated, steps are taken to repair the communication difficulty. This cooperative principle holds for any joint task; as responsible people we are expected to assess the nature of an ongoing situation and act accordingly.

In extended written language, the writer cannot monitor the effect of his or her work on an intended audience (Chafe, 1982). Skilled writers must review and evaluate their own work (Nold, 1981). Bonita appeared to evaluate her writing when she perceived her audience as evaluators. In Composition events, for example, Bonita seemed to view her teacher and peers simply as an audience for her writing. She consistently requested the opportunity to share her pieces with them, but their role was only to witness or view her piece. Bonita did not appear to interpret their attending, or lack of attention, to her work as an indication of evaluation. There did not seem to be any standards she was aware of meeting (or not meeting) beyond chronicling her experiences.

Bonita's lack of self-evaluation is not being interpreted negatively here. Many writing experts have noted the importance of writing freely as pieces of writing are begun, thus avoiding disrupting and blocking writing by premature editing (Perl, 1979). Further, Graves (1981) notes that children's lack of self-evaluation allows them time to explore and become comfortable with writing as a medium of expression. However, since skilled writers are seen as self-evaluators, the literacy events in which this behavior emerged seems worthy of note.

Both Boardwork and Child-Initiated events appeared to involve self-evaluation. In Boardwork, the teacher controlled writing's pattern and content and officially evaluated written products. Bonita informally

evaluated her work as she proceeded in her efforts to complete her work correctly. Her attention was focused particularly on following the appropriate directions--uncovering the pattern of what was to be done--and on using capitalization and punctuation marks correctly.

In Child-Initiated events, standards were in evidence as well, although the standards did not appear to be based on the teacher's evaluative comments. The containers Bonita made were identical to those made by other class members. She appeared to have a concept of what a story "oughta' be like." She also had a sense of how her letters should sound, apparently based on feedback from her mother. In story and letter writing, Bonita engaged in self-evaluation. Further, in story writing Bonita engaged in observable planning as well, commenting on the topic she would write about and the nature of her story; the planning may have been related to the content options story writing offered.

Planning and self-evaluation--controlling one's own thinking--seem significant behaviors. They are viewed as the goal of formal education by many developmental psychologists, including Bruner (1966), Piaget and Inhelder (1969), and Vygotsky (1962, 1978). Recently the ability to control one's own thinking has been referred to as "metacognition"--the ability to predict the consequences of one's actions, check the results, monitor ongoing activity, and so on (Brown, 1982). As previously noted, this monitoring of ongoing activity--of the extent to which one is fulfilling one's intentions--is characteristic of mature writers (Birbaum, 1982; Flowers & Hayes, 1981; Graves, 1983; Nold, 1981).

Although self-evaluation was present in both Boardwork and Child-Initiated writing, Boardwork did not involve Bonita in controlling her own meaning formation but, rather, in attempting to match the perceived demands

of her teacher. That is, her goal was to understand outside demands so that she could perform assigned tasks successfully. The goal of Child-Initiated writing was to create products for her own pleasure and to share with others. Bruner's (1980, p. 408) comments on the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on behavior are applicable here:

> For when the task is his own rather than a matter of matching environmental demands he becomes his own paymaster in a certain measure. Seeking to gain control over his environment, he can now treat success as indicating that he is on the right track, failure as indicating he is on the wrong one.
>
> In the end, this development has the effect of freeing learning from immediate stimulus control. When learning in the short run leads only to pellets of this or that rather than to mastery in the long run, then behavior can be readily shaped by extrinsic rewards. When behavior becomes more long range and competence-oriented, it comes under the control of more complex cognitive structures, plans and the like, and operates from the inside out.

This notion of control from the inside out seems critical. As argued by psychologists concerned with the human need for competence, success in gaining control over one's environment leads both to pleasure and persistence (see Gottfried, 1983, for a review of research on intrinsic motivation in young children). Many writing researchers have noted that, when children engage in writing that they are in control of--when they are working out their own ideas to make them clear for someone else--revising and editing appear (Calkins, 1980; Edelsky & Smith, 1984; Graves, 1983). Writing mechanics become important as concern with readability increases. Bonita's

behaviors illustrate well the self-sustaining motivation writing can induce.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Bonita engaged in the most sophisticated writing behaviors in the events she structured herself. Planning, reviewing, and editing were not skills taught in her classroom but strategies used in a particular type of writing event. Certainly adult support (through modeling, questioning) might have contributed to Bonita's skill. Still, her behaviors suggest the value of examining the kinds of instructional contexts in which particular types of writing behaviors emerge.

The analogy to oral language skill is clear here. Linguists can construct complex theoretical descriptions of the means by which speakers connect meaning and sounds, but these complex rules need not be taught to young children. Rather, the rules emerge as children communicate in varied contexts with supportive adults. The dominant concern in the writing literature with writing as problem-solving may thus be overdrawn. Florio (1983, p. 98) argues similarly:

> Without viewing writing as a cultural tool to be used for our own purposes rather than an externally imposed problem to be solved in isolation, we may start from the limiting assumption that writing is going to be difficult. That is a very different assumption than that it is going to be useful, empowering, or enlightening. We may further assume that the teaching of writing amounts to task mastering. This is a very different assumption about teaching than that it is the crafting and maintaining of meaningful learning environments for and with beginners.

In summary, recent writing researchers have criticized the schools for stripping writing of a meaningful purpose. Teale (1984, p. 139), for

example, notes that "[b] y organizing instruction which omits [motives, goals, and conditions], the teacher ignores how literacy is practiced (and therefore learned) and thereby creates a situation in which the teaching is an inappropriate model for the learning." The point of the present study is that in fact we cannot strip away a child's motives and goals. Writing is always a social activity conducted to accomplish a purpose. The child's purpose may be simply to finish an assignment without error--or to formulate an idea to be shared with others; many of the skills thought to be taught in the former situation emerge as meaningful only in the latter. Researchers, then, might attend more carefully to the social contexts in which child writing occurs. By systematically examining classroom writing contexts and the writing behaviors they encourage, researchers should be able collaboratively to describe qualities of classroom environments that appear beneficial to writing growth. Similarly practitioners might critically examine their own classrooms as literacy environments. Perhaps there are Bonita's in many classrooms, writing on their own between the demands of school writing tasks--and offering valuable insights into the power of writing as an expressive and communicative tool.

CHAPTER THREE

WRITING AS A SOCIAL ACTIVITY:

HIGHLIGHTING PEER INFLUENCE

Highlighting Peer Influence

This chapter introduces Ayrio, one of Bonita's peers. As with Bonita's, Ayrio's interpretation of school writing events is best understood when placed within the framework of writing as a social activity. The aspects of literacy events affecting Bonita's behavior are again factors in understanding Ayrio's behaviors; thus, the initiators, controllers, audiences, and evaluators of events are described in his case as well.

Ayrio's school writing events were, however, different from Bonita's. His purpose for writing varied from hers as did the social circle in which he moved. Most notably, Ayrio, unlike Bonita, was a member of a small group of peers who shared experiences both inside and outside the classroom. As will be illustrated, Ayrio's peers influenced the nature of his writing concerns more pervasively than did Bonita's. Ayrio's case thus provides further information on the nature of writing as a social activity and highlights as well the potential role of peers in writing growth.

Ayrio[1]

Ayrio, an Anglo male, was 7 years and 5 months at the beginning of this study. A standard English-speaker, he was of average height and weight for his age, with straight blond hair combed neatly forward to within an inch or more of his blue eyes. Ayrio was in the average reading group of his second grade class and could read from his 2[2] (second grade, second semester) textbook without difficulty.

More so than Bonita, Ayrio was a sociable child. He was very interested

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[1]Kay H. Salter is the first author of the Ayrio case study.

in what was going on around him and, in particular, was fond of interacting quietly with his friend Chris, a member of the high group. In spite of his talkative nature, Ayrio was careful to attend to Ms. Kane whenever she talked and often raised his hand to share his ideas with her and the rest of the class. He was not loud or disruptive and, in general, could be counted on to complete his assignments without spending more time off task than on.

Ayrio, like Bonita, appeared to want to do well in school. He often asked Ms. Kane, his teacher, about the proper procedure to follow in doing an assignment and, in addition, inquired about his performance on tests. But, also like Bonita, he seldom made Ms. Kane's list of "super" workers, who were recognized daily for neat and accurate work.

Ayrio was chosen for intensive study because (a) Ms. Kane considered him to be an "average" writer for her classroom; (b) Ayrio did, on the basis of observation, appear to fall between the more sophisticated and less sophisticated writers in his classroom, as evidenced by his free writing samples; those samples were examined for clarity of information, logicalness of organization, varied sentence patterns, clarity of syntax, and mechanics; and finally, (c) Ayrio was comfortable and talkative with the researcher.

Near the end of phase one, Ayrio was asked about his interest in and perceptions of the reasons for writing. Like Bonita, Ayrio indicated that he enjoyed writing and that he wrote for a variety of purposes. While at school, Ayrio explained, he wrote "boardwork" and "language"; at home, he wrote poems, stories (some copied, some original creations), letters, and "lists of people's names that I can invite to my birthday" (even though his birthday was six months away).

Interestingly, Ayrio, also like Bonita, considered boardwork to be a particularly important kind of writing. When asked what he would write if

he could write anything he wanted, Ayrio replied that "if I knew what I could write with sentences, I could write what my teacher writes on the board." He further explained that his grandmother, a former teacher, had taught him when he was five: "She had a chalkboard. She wrote things that I should write--sentences."

Consistent with Bonita's response, Ayrio felt writing well entailed being neat. In fact, "my mother uses a typewriter" in an effort to be a good writer.

The most notable contrast to Bonita was Ayrio's perception of adult writing. While she had focused on the everyday uses of writing in practical situations, Ayrio highlighted aesthetic and pleasurable uses as well as professional uses in jobs that necessitated story writing. He explained that adults write because "it might be fun to them, and they like--sometimes they like to write poems too. Some people work in the newspaper too. Michael's father works at the newspaper." Further, he reported that his mother wrote at home with a typewriter and that she sent her stories "off to other people by the mail" to get published.

In the following sections, Ayrio's school writing behaviors will be described. Both his concern with boardwork and his valuing of the aethestic and pleasurable uses of writing will be affirmed.

Ayrio's School Writing Occasions

Ayrio was observed for 26 writing events: 5 Composition events, 16 Boardwork events, and 5 Child-Initiated events. In addition, all of Ayrio's free writing and boardwork products were collected weekly during phase two. Ayrio, like Bonita, seemed to have distinctively different approaches for each of the three types of writing occasions in this classroom. These

approaches are described in the following sections.

Composition. During free writing events, Ayrio consistently began his papers by telling about something that had happened the day before, or which he hoped would happen that day. This chronological reporting was exactly the organizational pattern Bonita had followed. However, if, after a few opening sentences on one topic, another occurred to him, Ayrio made a transition to this new idea. For example, Ayrio wrote the following piece by beginning with the cub scout meeting, but then moved on into something that he evidently found more interesting:

Child's Text	Code	Notes
L	S	
	IS-R	"Hey, . . . hey. We don't [have to] do the board [work]. We just have to do [free] writing. Okay."
-ast	OV	"Last"
	P	Looks at observer
		(3 seconds)
night	S	
	P	Looks around
		(3 seconds)
I went to the pack meeting	S	Finishes one line
	IS-R	"Oh, yeah. I forgot to tell you I got a new bike!"
		(Researcher responds: "Great!".)
But first I want	S	Begins writing again
to	OV	"to"
tell	OV	"tell"
you	S	
	P	Sighs (2 seconds)
something	S	End of line

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	OV	"Okay."
I	S	
got	OV	"got"
a	OV	"a"
new	OV	"new"
bike	S	

Key: Dialogue: IS-R - Interruption Solicited from Researcher; Monologue: OV - Overt language; Other: S - Silence; P - Pause.

Ayrio's completed piece read as follows:

> Last night I went to the pack meeting
> But first I want to tell you something.
> I got a new bike. It is yellow and
> on the wheels it is spray painted red
> not the rubber stough. and I will be
> riding it today. you might see me
> riding my bike today It cousted 40
> dollars. that is not to much moey.
> chris all readey saw it. you
> will see it. I know you will see it

Typically Ayrio wrote about personal experiences--Star Wars movies, characters, and toys, Cub Scout meetings, video games, bikes, going home with his friend Chris, and trips he had made or hoped to make to see relatives. On two occasions, however, he wrote imaginative pieces, which introduced humorous characters. One was about a toad who did "corroty [karate]," and the other was about the movie character, E.T., who had

become a highly popular topic with all the children. Ayrio did not write his imaginative story about E.T. until five days after another child had shared an E.T. story, which was well-received by the class. Several stories were written about E.T. after that. All of them made attempts at being humorous by describing how E.T. did ridiculous things, involving either the writer of the paper or someone else in the class. In Ayrio's E.T. paper, he had the little alien visiting him on earth, asking for help in getting back home, mistaking Ayrio's offer of a "flying sausar" for a "flying sasuge," and, finally, having to be corrected and taken back to "planet E.T." by Ayrio himself. Similary, Ayrio's toad story came 10 days after his friend Chris had shared a "toad" story, which was well-received by the group.

Ayrio wrote fluently during the morning free write, pausing primarily at the end of sentences. He vocalized at times when attempting a longer, more complex sentence or a more difficult spelling than usual. He engaged in some self-monitoring language (e.g.," . . . just gonna," as he drew a large exclamation point at the end of his title "star wars"), but he did not do so frequently. Ayrio did not appear to focus on mechanics. His use of capitalization and punctuation varied. Near the beginning of a piece, he tended to begin sentences with capital letters, but, as he progressed, he used them less. Ayrio included periods and commas at times, the latter used primarily between objects in a series. He also made occasional use of exclamation marks (michael saw my bike too!!!) and quotation marks for names of movies and games ("star wars"). At times, Ayrio added other graphics to his pieces as well, such as small pictures or wavy lines to divide one day's writing from another's on the same page.

Like Bonita, Ayrio appeared to value sharing his work with the class. He consistently volunteered to read his work. He would usually go to the

front of the room smiling; often, upon returning to his seat, he would look over and grin at his friend, Chris. Ayrio was even observed to smile as he composed.

The latter evident pleasure in writing was reminiscent of Bonita's behavior during Child-Initiated writing. Also similarly to Bonita's self-initiated work, Ayrio was clearly sensitive to his audience, in this case, his peers. He appeared to want to present himself positively to them (as did Bonita during free writing), but he went beyond that to a concern with their evaluation of his work. He frequently addressed a general "you." His writings were either humorous, like the E.T. story, or potentially impressive, like the new bicycle piece noted above. In the latter work, Ayrio clearly illustrated a concern for his audience. He anticipated their reaction to the price of his bike: "that is not to much moey [money]." Upon sharing the piece with the class, he did encounter quite a bit of laughter when he read that line. He continued, though, with his written acknowledgement that the bike had not cost much money. The laughter stopped, and Ayrio was able to read to the end of his paper without further incident.

As indicated above, Ayrio did get observable responses from at least some and, at times, from the majority of his peers. His pieces about personal experiences were listened to by his friends Chris, Mathew, Michael, and John. In turn, Ayrio listened attentively to their work. The boys objected at times to each other's written statements--inaccurate titles of movies or video games, scores or dates of YMCA soccer games, and such.

Ayrio attended noticeably to the reading of other peers only intermittently; he was particularly attentive to humorous pieces. Ayrio was sensitive, as noted earlier, to the responses others received and did attempt, with success, to use their topics and forms (e.g., stories about E.T. and the toad).

In one event, Ayrio even wrote a "joke" for the class (after another child had done so earlier): I have a joke for you. It was the first one to ride in the space shuttle. What am I? When reading the joke to his classmates, he provided the answer after an appropriate pause ("a monkey").

When Ayrio was apparently particularly involved in a topic, he would continue writing while others were reading their papers. At times he even whispered questions to other children in order to verify his written statements. For example, while writing a piece about a visit to his friend Chris's home, Ayrio could not recall the name of Chris's sister. He tried to get Chris's attention so that he could ask about the name, but he was unsuccessful. But, when reading his paper to the class during sharing time, Ayrio correctly supplied "Sarah." Upon sitting down, Ayrio did not revise his paper by adding the name. He had supplied it for his audience while reading and did not find it necessary to add the name to his paper after sharing was done.

Ayrio was only observed once to make a change or addition to his paper after he had finished. One day he wrote a piece about buying three things at the local mall. The next day, as he was about to begin a new free writing entry directly below the mall piece, he paused for about eight seconds, erased the word three in the mall entry, substituted the word for, and then added the newly recalled item --"new tape recorder." His mall piece now read as follows:

Yesterday I went to mall!
and I got something! No I got for
things. new tape recorder!
I got a bee bee, and a mot control car
and I got a Star wars cartret [cartridge].

Finally, he drew a line from a to the additional words new tape recorder and

then finally drew another line underneath that entry to separate it from the new piece he was going to begin writing.

During free writing events, then, Ayrio's intention seemed to be to report personal and, occasionally, to create imaginary experiences for himself and for his audience. He attempted to entertain the audience by amusing or impressing them. He did not attend notably to mechanics, but he did attend to the accuracy of details and facts included in his pieces.

As noted in Bonita's chapter, constrained free writing events were rare; during the study, only one such event was noted, and Ayrio's behavior during this event was similar to that exhibited during the morning free writing. The task involved was to write a story using a sentence supplied by the reading workbook. After writing their stories in their workbooks, the children shared their pieces.

Ayrio wrote his story fluently, pausing only briefly at sentence or phrase units. His focus, again as in the free write, seemed to be on conveying an interesting or amusing idea, rather than on mechanics. Ayrio attempted to make up a story to fit what was suggested by the workbook but, at the same time, to incorporate "impressive" elements of his own--scuba diving, sharks, and a treasure. His completed story read as follows:

> I was sailing on a boat. [First sentence supplied by workbook.] Then we hit a rock. Then we jumped of the boat. Then we were scuba diving. Then we had to fight some sharkes then we saw something gliddering It was a gold ring. Then we found the treasure.

By the time he concluded the piece, Ayrio had begun smiling, as he had been observed to do during free writing. He seemed especially pleased with the phrase "something gliddering"; after writing those words, he turned

to the observer, repeated "gliddering," and grinned.

Boardwork. As in the case of Bonita, Ayrio's behavior during Boardwork was distinctly different from his behavior during Composition. Similarly to her behavior, Ayrio wrote less fluently. He hesitated longer before beginning his writing tasks and paused more frequently during the task itself. Also like Bonita, Ayrio expressed confusion about his assignments, making extensive use of self-monitoring and self-evaluating language; his comments reflected a concern with what an answer was "'spose' to be" and how answers should be arranged on his paper.

At times, Ayrio attempted to clear up his confusion by simply moving on to the next task, assuring himself that he'd think of it in a minute." As he moved on, he would mutter exclamations such as, "oh," "augh," and "owie." Generally Ayrio came back to the difficult sections and tried them again, never asking the teacher for assistance. His behavior contrasts with Bonita's as, when stumped, Bonita simply put down something and moved on. The following description of Ayrio's behaviors during a series of writing events illustrates his concerns and work style:

> On this day, Ayrio's boardwork consisted of a series of spelling tasks. The directions on the board were:
>
> 1. Write all your spelling words on pages 154 and 158.
>
> 2., 3., 4. Do 1, 2, and 3 on page 157 of your spelling book.
>
> Ayrio completed the first task with no hesitation. However, the second posed a problem. Number 2 on the board was number 1 in the spelling book. Ayrio commented to himself, "Hmm . . . number 2 . . . what's number 2?" Ayrio re-read the directions and then compared the numbers in the text (1, 2, 3) to the numbers on the board (2, 3, 4).

Ayrio pressed on, skipping the text's number 1 and beginning with number 2. He still, though, appeared concerned about his behavior; at one point he paused for several seconds, shook out his arms and hands as if trying to relax, and uttered "owee" and "augh."

With number 2 done, Ayrio moved on to number 3. This item involved copying and analyzing the following text:

The cook has six quart carts. (picture of cook with six jars)

The jars are full of sand. (picture of a cart full of sand)

The instructions explained that "one word in each sentence is wrong. Write the sentence with the right words."

Upon reading the book's directions, Ayrio commented, "Mmm. I don't know what that's supposed to be but I'll . . . [sighs]. . . But I don't know what the real word's 'sposed to be. Hmm. I don't know what it's 'sposed to be!" Ayrio did not write anything on his paper, finally commenting, "We'll find out in a second."

Ayrio then moved on to number 4, but here he encountered another problem. There was no number 4 in the book. Recall that there was a number 4 on the board. "Where's number 4? Oh, phooey. Can't . . . There's no number 4. I don't know why."

Ayrio now returned to number 3, puzzling again over what the answer to that task was "'sposed to be. Uh humm . . . sand. Oh, you can look up here [at the spelling word list]. The cook has six . . . hmmm . . .." Finally, Ayrio noticed the picture of the cook with jars and wrote, The cook has six jars. He left out quart, a word he did not recognize.

As the preceding illustrated, Ayrio often spent longer looking for a way to approach a task than he did actually completing it. Tasks with familiar formats were much less time-consuming: "Oh, this is easy" as "we done this yesterday."

As with Bonita, Ayrio was concerned about the amount of work he had completed and the amount remaining to be done. At times, Ayrio noted that his group had more boardwork than did the other groups (which was an accurate observation):

> I have to finish my work. Phooey, phooey, I don't like doing work. All they [the low group students] have to do is just do that [small amount on the chalkboard]. They don't have any work.

As Ayrio worked, he often stopped to compare the amount of work he had done with others (usually his friend Chris or Damion, who sat near him). However, Ayrio paused to engage in other non-task related behaviors as well--looking out the window, staring into space, or listening and then participating in others' conversations. He appeared, then, easily distracted during boardwork, a behavior not noted in Bonita's case study. Consider, for example, the following fill-in-the-blank event:

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	OV	"Alright"
1. It's ____ to	S	Ayrio uses a ruler to make the "blank"
swim	S	
in	OV	"in rough"
rough	S	
water	S	
	P	Ayrio looks at the board and

continued

Child's Text	Code	Notes
unsafe	S	writes the correct work in the blank.
2. I had to	S	
_____	IS-R	"I like using these [rulers] to make make straight lines."
my supper.	S	
	P	Ayrio looks at the board and
reheat	S	writes the correct word in the blank.
		Ayrio continues on in this manner until, as he glances up to view the board, he notes that Damion is reading
	IS-P	a joke book. He asks Damion to read him some jokes.
		Damion: You through [with your work]?
		Ayrio: Just ask me some.
		Damion: Why is the river rich?
		Catosky, another peer, is listening now too and responds:
		Because he has too much water.
		Damion: No.
		Ayrio: I give up.
		Damion: Because it has two banks.
		Ayrio: Oh, I get it.
		As Damion reads another joke, Ayrio glances
5. Ray	S	at the board and begins his next item.
	IS-P	Ayrio now takes the book and reads a joke to Damion and Catosky. Then Damion retrieves the book to read another. Catosky stops doing her work to listen, but Ayrio now both copies the board and listens to the jokes.

continued

Child's Text	Code	Notes
was _____	S	
		At this point, Ms. Kane asks to see Damion's work. When he leaves, Catosky grabs the joke book from his desk and begins looking through it.
when his	S	
	IU-P	Catosky asks Ayrio: How do you hold a bat?
		Ayrio: With two hands.
		Catosky: By the wings (laughs).
brother moved away	S	As Catosky continues to read, Ayrio listens and also completes his boardwork correctly.

KEY: Dialogue: IS-P - Interruption Solicited from Peer; IS-R - Interruption Solicited from Researcher; IU-P - Interruption Unsolicited from Peer; Monologue: OV - Overt Language; Other: S - Silence; P - Pause.

Ayrio not only paused to engage in off-task behaviors at his desk, but he also moved about the room for brief periods. He took these breaks after he had been working for an extended period of time. For example, one day, while nearing the end of a copying-and-editing event, Ayrio began looking across the room at some plants sitting on the window ledge. He commented, "I'm gonna see--I'm gonna see after I finish this." Then, after writing three more words (which left but one more word to write), Ayrio went over to examine the plants. Afterward, he quickly came back to his desk and wrote the last word of his task.

Perhaps Ayrio's lack of sustained involvement with his boardwork accounted

for his frequent omission of letters and words. For example, while copying during a fill-in-the-blank event, Ayrio omitted the verb in one sentence and the subject in another, all within the space of four lines: It unsafe to swim in rough water. Can retake the picture?

Ayrio's primary concern during Boardwork, then, appeared to be to finish the tasks correctly, having followed the directions and arranged the work neatly on his paper. He allowed himself breaks from his tasks, though, to interact with peers or to move about the room. Intermittently Ayrio also evidenced a concern with his handwriting, a concern not apparent during Composition events. Ayrio was, in fact, relatively more attentive to his cursive than was Bonita, although her cursive was less legible. Ayrio frequently erased and re-formed letters, looked up the model letters in the front of his speller, and commented negatively about his handwriting. Once when copying barn from his speller, Ayrio wrote the word, then erased and re-formed the b, next erased and re-wrote the whole word, and finally erased the b again, commenting, "I can't make it very well. I should make it bigger." After a fourth try, Ayrio concluded, "Now it's good." The word was smaller and neater, but the b resembled an l, as it had initially. Ayrio's cursive did become more legible during the course of the study; his awkward and large letters became smaller and more cleanly shaped.

In regard to other mechanics, Ayrio attended to capitalization and punctuation primarily during copying-and-editing events, in contrast to Bonita's pervasive concern during Boardwork. He generally capitalized the first letter of sentences but found proper nouns puzzling ("Is governor supposed to be a capital?" "Hope that isn't a capital?" [in reference to states]). Ayrio usually placed periods correctly at the end of his sentences; however, he tended to use them incorrectly when question marks were needed.

On one occasion, Ayrio added quotation marks to two sentences during a copying/analyzing words task (in which whole sentences were copied). For no apparent reason, Ayrio produced: "You'd better get food before you leave." and "It's too late to go."

To recap, then, during Boardwork events, Ayrio's major concerns were to identify and follow proper procedures for varied tasks and to simply finish his work. Intermittently he also attended to his cursive letters, taking care to erase and rewrite letters he judged unacceptable. Like Bonita, Ayrio appeared to give minimal attention to the meaning of his copied words and sentences. He seldom reread his written work, although, on occasion, he did comment to the researcher about copied words or sentences that were of personal interest; for example, he copied I know how to stand on my head and remarked, "I know how to stand on my head too." When assigned to compose sentences with given words, Ayrio wrote simple, impersonal ones: I have a car., I have a arm., I found a part., I did a good thing., I did a bad thing.

In sum, then, Ayrio was less concerned with meaning during Boardword than he was during Composition. In contrast to his control of approaches to Composition, he had no control over the forms and content demanded by Boardwork. Ayrio's primary concern was to understand each task's directions and, then, finish.

Child-Initiated occasions. After finishing his Boardwork, Ayrio engaged in a wide variety of self-initiated writing tasks. He made trash bins, name cards, and flags for his desk, created a secret code, wrote notes to his friend Chris, jotted down peers' phone numbers, and even placed extra graphics on his completed papers (e.g., "persent" preceded by a blank at the top of his boardwork papers).

As with Bonita, the differences between assigned and self-initiated

writing were not simply that Child-Initiated writing included more forms. The purposes guiding the use of these forms varied. During Boardwork, Ayrio wrote to complete his work successfully; during Composition, to report his past or hoped-for experiences for himself and for his peers; and during Child-Initiated writing, again to report experiences, but also to imitate adult role models, to create games, and to fulfill practical needs--to communicate messages to a peer when talking was not possible and to record information for future use.

Unlike Bonita's, most of Ayrio's Child-Initiated events did not involve extended text. Most frequently, he imitated adult role models, creating adaptations of common graphic objects, such as trash bins, name cards, and flags. These objects were displayed on his desk--and on the desks of many children in the room. All the children followed a similar pattern in producing these objects. The originator of each object was not generally identifiable, as children identified peers close to them as the source of the object--and those children identified others. Ayrio, though, and another member of his reading group, Julio, were most active in their production of these objects. Ayrio did appear to be the originator of the desk card (his was the first to appear): a desk card was a piece of paper folded to stand up on the desk and containing the child's name. Ayrio's read:

Ayrio: At work

call at

work

353-9790

Trash bins were also popular objects. A piece of paper was folded and fastened together to create a container. On the front of Ayrio's bin were the words: Please put trash here. The bin was attached to the side of his desk with a bit of tape.

Ayrio appeared unique in the graphics added to his boardwork pages. Since these graphics were not displayed for his peers, they could not spread as easily to others. Ayrio, for example, occasionally added persent to the top of his papers, filling in a hopeful 100 or just leaving the blank empty. This behavior might be judged to fulfill practical purposes, but his teacher did not use his blanks. Ayrio also placed arrows and written directions (turn over) at the bottom of his papers; again, these might be considered as fulfilling practical needs--but Ms. Kane undoubtedly would have checked the back of his papers (as she did everyone else's) for the remainder of his written work.

Ayrio did, however, use writing to fulfill practical needs. He jotted down children's names and phone numbers and did actually use these when calling his friends outside school. In addition he wrote notes to his friend Chris during class, when he apparently desired to communicate a message and could not do so, as Chris sat parallel to Ayrio, but on the other side of the room. Since these notes were private, the observer was able to read only one that had been left on Ayrio's desk--an angry note to Chris, informing him that Ayrio never wanted to go over to his house again.

Ayrio also wrote to create games--more specifically, to devise a secret code that he had learned about in a Cub Scout meeting. In this secret code, a number represented each alphabet letter. Ayrio's ten-year-old cousin in Wisconsin was in Cub Scouts too and also knew the secret code. This cousin had written Ayrio a letter in secret code and now Ayrio planned to answer in a similar fashion.

On one occasion Ayrio was observed to write a lengthy text during a self-initiated writing occasion. During the transition period before a Weekly Reader lesson, Kevin, a peer sitting near Ayrio, had drawn a knight on

horseback; the drawing had impressed the children, who had spontaneously gathered around Kevin to admire it. As the Weekly Reader lesson began, Ayrio positioned a piece of computer paper behind his raised newspaper. Throughout the lesson, Ayrio worked on his own drawing of a knight. When the lesson was over, Ayrio began writing on the paper, describing his drawing and a "King Sirlancealot" movie he had seen on the television. Ayrio informed the researcher, as she moved in to observe the writing, that the piece was for the school newspaper. Although the production of such a text was rare, Ayrio's writing behaviors were suggestive, particularly when compared with Bonita's self-initiated writing. Thus, an excerpt from the observation sheets for this event is included below:

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		At this point, Ayrio has written:
this picture is "King Sirlancealot" and the sword. This is when he get's the sward out of the stone. I saw it on T.V.! It was a good movie! I hope I see it again. Did you ever see the movie on T.V.?		
*	P	Ayrio now pauses and then adds an asterisk to the first line.
	///	Then he erases the *.
"King Sirlancealot"	S	Ayrio adds a name at the top of his text, directly underneath the picture.
	IU-R	Dyson: Is that the title?
		Ayrio: It's the name of a movie.
I hope you see it on T.V.	S	Ayrio begins writing again.

continued

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	P	
If yu	S	
	///	Ayrio erases the u.
you	OV	"you ever"
see the move	S	
	///	Ayrio erases the e.
ie you will like	S	
it	OV	"it"
very much	S	
	P	
'	S	Ayrio changes the period to an exclamation point.
I know a lot of people have seen it.		
	IU-P	Damion: Can I read your story after you're through?
		Ayrio: (nods)
	DR	Ayrio now begins working on his picture again. The P.E. teacher comes into the room, and Ayrio's teacher leaves. The P.E. teacher, confined to the classroom on this rainy day, directs the children to put everything away so that they may exercise with a movement record. Most of the children put their materials away and stand up, but they are talking and laughing, and the P.E. teacher is struggling for order. Ayrio, meanwhile, has continued to sit and work on his drawing. Finally, when the teacher notes his behavior, Ayrio puts the picture away and stands with the others.

KEY: Dialogue: IU-P - Interruption Unsolicited from Peer; IU-R - Interruption Unsolicited from Researcher; Monologue: OV - Overt Language; Other: S - Silence; P - Pause; DR - Drawing; /// - Erasing.

Ayrio wrote fluently during this event, as he did during Composition events, even continuing to write when such behavior was clearly inappropriate. His sustained involvement was similar to his behavior in certain composition events and to Bonita's behavior during Child-Initiated events. Ayrio also appeared similarly sensitive to his hoped-for-audience, writing statements addressed to a general "you" (Did you ever see the movie on T.V.?).

However, in this Child-Initiated, as opposed to official Composition event, Ayrio seemed relatively more concerned with the appearance of his product. His capitalization and punctuation were conventional, with only the first this incorrectly written. (Handwriting was not a concern here as Ayrio was using the more comfortable manuscript rather than cursive.) Ayrio adjusted his spellings as he proceeded. Once he returned to a period to convert it into an exclamation point. He initially added an asterisk to his piece but then erased it and added the most conventional heading--a title. This seemed appropriate as all articles in the school newspaper had titles.

Actually, Ayrio's piece never appeared in the school newspaper; articles for the newspaper were organized and turned in by the classroom teacher, who had not asked Ayrio for this piece. So, Ayrio may have been playing here, although he gave no indication of that. Nonetheless, he had at least one eager reader. Reminiscent of George and Kori's interest in Bonita's stories, Damion expressed a desire to read Ayrio's writing.

Ayrio's final interview. As with Bonita, during the last week of data collection, Ayrio was asked to evaluate varied samples of his writing. In addition, he was questioned about the reasons behind his own and others' writing, as was done in the initial interview. The reasons Ayrio discussed were similar to those mentioned in the initial interview and thus will not

be repeated here.

Ayrio evaluated his Composition products (two free writing papers) differently. One was "good," the other "not too good." Ayrio based his evaluations on his handwriting. He explained that the "good" one was written before he began writing smaller, and, therefore, it was sloppier. Indeed, it had large manuscript letters and included several blots and erasures. The "good" paper was neatly done in small cursive.

Ayrio evaluated his Boardwork products on the basis of handwriting also. All Boardwork products were good because his writing was small and, thereby, neat.

In brief, Ayrio's interview, contrasting Bonita's, did not complement his varied behaviors during the observed writing occasions. "Good" writing was dependent on handwriting. The interview had begun with a discussion of "good" writing (handwriting), and Ayrio kept that focus for the remainder of the interview. Certainly handwriting was an observable concern of Ayrio, most notably during Boardwork. But his behaviors had suggested other concerns as well, including the responses of peers to his shared free writing. Perhaps if Ayrio had been asked about "good boardwork" or "good stories" his responses would have been different.

So firmly focused on handwriting was Ayrio that he even referred to it during the discussion of adults' reasons for writing. He explained that his mother "types all the things she does. Uh, stories and songs--other kinds of stuff. . . A typewriter can write better than anyone in the whole world."

Summary

Ayrio's behaviors across varied writing occasion types, like Bonita's,

suggested relationships between features of literacy events and ways of writing. Ayrio's behaviors were, in certain respects, similar to Bonita's; yet, he clearly interpreted school writing tasks differently as well. Most notably, Ayrio appeared more sensitive to the responses of his audience and engaged in some self-evaluative behaviors in all occasion types, as indicated by verbal comments and redoing work. However, the criteria governing that evaluation varied across types.

In Composition events, Ayrio, like Bonita, focused on his evolving meaning. He generally followed a chronological pattern and related his anticipated or past out-of-school experiences. Ayrio shared the control of writing's form and content with his teacher, as he generally followed her initial suggestion regarding what to write during the morning free writing period. He did, however, occasionally attempt other forms and topics.

Ayrio, more so than Bonita, seemed sensitive to his peers' responses to specific aspects of his text; his peers thus served as informal evaluators of his work. Thus, he attempted writing forms and topics that were responded to positively by others. Further, he addressed his audience directly ("you") and even used a joke to engage their participation in his oral reading. In addition, Ayrio evaluated his own work, anticipating his peers' evaluations of his reported facts, especially the evaluations of a small group of boys with whom he regularly played. Ayrio also appeared to positively value his pieces, smiling occasionally when writing and after sharing.

During Composition events, Ayrio, like Bonita, did not attend notably to mechanics. These pieces, after all, were not read--the visual conventions were not evaluated by others.

In Boardwork events, there was not a consistent pattern to be followed. Further, Ayrio's teacher was the controller (the composer) of the writing's

form and content, its audience, and its formal evaluator. Thus, as with Bonita, Ayrio's major concerns were to understand the procedure to be followed and to complete his work. His self-monitoring and self-evaluative language reflected those concerns. Intermittently Ayrio also evidenced a concern with mechanics. While Bonita's overriding mechanics concerns during Boardwork events were capitalization and punctuation, Ayrio's was handwriting. Both children, then, evidenced a concern with writing's conventional appearance--a concern that appeared related to their teacher's evaluations of written boardwork.

Ayrio was more distracted during Boardwork events than Bonita had been. He paused and looked around the room, chatted with his neighbors, and took short walks within the room. The lengthy period of time spent on boardwork (up to an hour at a time, longer than Bonita's independent work time), his sociality, and the relatively mechanical nature of the tasks are all factors that might have affected his ability or need to concentrate. (Ayrio could copy sentences, fill in blanks, listen to his neighbors' chatting, and still finish his work on time.)

As with Bonita, Child-Initiated writing events introduced new forms and purposes for writing. Ayrio's interest in graphic creations--hinted at in the graphics he added to his Composition and Boardwork papers--found expression in a variety of graphic products. A variety of purposes emerged too as Ayrio wrote not only to report experiences or complete assignments, but also to imitate adult role models, create games, and fulfill practical needs. Ayrio took control here of writing's form and content--he determined what and how he would write.

While Bonita clearly evaluated her self-initiated written texts and used others' responses as evaluative feedback, Ayrio did so less notably.

Ayrio's primary interest was in imitating adult role models through the creation of graphic objects, such as trash bins and name cards. In creating these products, Ayrio followed the general formats that were consistent for all members of the class engaging in such behavior. So, while there was a "standard" to be met, in a sense, there clearly was no need for extensive revision of text. The products were displayed for others to view more than read.

In doing the one observed extensive text, the "Sirlancealot" piece, Ayrio wrote fluently but also attended to the spelling and punctuation of his "newspaper article." Ayrio went back to revise his drawing when his piece was completed, but he did not return to his writing. However, Ayrio did not have an extended period of time within which to work and, in addition, his decision to produce the piece was prompted by viewing another child's drawing; in other words, it was the drawing, not the writing, that originally attracted him.

In summary as with Bonita, Ayrio's behavior varied with the nature of the literacy event. His control of form and content, his audiences and evaluators were important considerations in understanding his writing behaviors. Ayrio's and Bonita's cases compared suggest the complexity of school writing contexts. Not only are these contexts composed of readily observable features such as topic, form, and formal evaluators, they also include internal elements--the individual child's interests and perceptions of writing occasions.

CHAPTER FOUR

WRITING AS A SOCIAL ACTIVITY:
THE SERIOUS WRITER AT WORK

Writing as a Social Activity:
The Serious Writer at Work

This chapter focuses on the last of the case study children examined in this project, Duranne. For Duranne too writing was a social activity, taking place within the constellations of initiators, controllers, audiences, and evaluators within her classroom--and out of it. The previous cases of Bonita and Ayrio suggested that audiences and evaluators from the child's home environment entered school: Bonita wrote letters to her mother, Ayrio attempted a secret code message he had seen in a letter from his cousin. Duranne, however, seemed more rooted in her out-of-classroom than in her in-classroom experiences. While Ayrio's case highlighted peer influences, Duranne's highlights the power of out-of-classroom experiences in helping a child become a serious writer--one who views writing as an important tool for conducting the business and enjoying the pleasures of life.

Duranne

Duranne, an Anglo female, was 8 years and 4 months at the beginning of this study. Large-boned, she looked older than her years, especially when she wore lacey blouses, full skirts, nylons, and high boots. On those days, Duranne wore her long blond hair curled in ringlets. Some days, though, Duranne wore blue jeans and held her thick hair off her face with two plastic barrettes. When speaking, Duranne intermittently used nonstandard forms associated with Southern regional dialect (e.g., "done passed it", "It don't", "We ain't", "after them 10 weeks"). She was a member of the high reading group of her second grade class and could easily read from her 3^1 (third grade, first semester) textbook.

Duranne was moderately sociable, interacting occasionally with the children who sat around her, all members of the high group. She was generally attentive in whole class lessons, although she, like Bonita and Ayrio, frequently engaged in other activities during those lessons. While Bonita tended to fidgit and Ayrio to observe or interact with others, Duranne typically pulled other materials from her desk, often drawings she wished to complete.

During independent work time, Duranne stayed on task, similarly to Bonita and in contrast to Ayrio. Duranne commented on her work from time to time and occasionally exchanged comments with peers, particularly with Melanie, who sat in front of her.

Like Bonita and Ayrio, Duranne appeared to want to do well in school. She frequently asked her teacher questions about the procedures to be followed or difficulties she was having in her work. Duranne occasionally made Ms. Kane's list of "Super" workers; at times, Duranne's handwriting was somewhat messy and, in addition, her composed sentences for spelling and

reading words were not always sentences ("Hellow dear!").

Duranne was chosen for intensive study because (a) Ms. Kane considered her an "above average" writer for her classroom; (b) Duranne did, on the basis of observations, appear to be a relatively sophisticated writer for her classroom, as evidenced by her free writing samples; those samples were examined for clarity of information, logicalness of organization, varied sentence patterns, clarity of syntax, and mechanics; and finally, (c) Duranne was comfortable and talkative with me.

Near the end of phase one, Duranne was asked about her interest in and perceptions of the reasons for writing. Like her two closely observed peers, Duranne expressed positive feelings about writing; she was notably articulate in describing her writing activities and interests. At school, she explained, she wrote "sentences and fill-in-the-blanks, ABC order, ABC order with guide words, contractions, write the meaning and what page it's on and the guide words"--a fairly complete description of the kinds of boardwork given her reading group. In addition, "besides work," she wrote "stories and sometimes what I did . . . I write notes to my mother and father, and yesterday I wrote a letter to my sister [who is 18 and lives in another state]." At home, she also writes stories, poems, notes, and "work for my brother to do and teach him things. He's two. I teach him his ABC's and 123's." Also, "I write letters when I don't get to write 'em at school . . . and cards for Christmas presents." Writing at school was easier than writing at home because, at home, "you've got to find pencils and paper."

Like Bonita and Ayrio, Duranne felt her boardwork was the important school "work." Her own writing, however, was important: letters and notes must get written, and stories and poems were pleasurable; in addition, writing kept her out of trouble:

> I was bored when I finish my work, and I talked and got into trouble. So I started writing poems and then thought about writing stories. . . [Writing] means good feelings come to you. Before I write I usually draw a picture, and that picture makes me feel like mountains--it makes me feel good. All the colors and nature make me feel good. The picture makes me think of words that rhyme and the sun and the moon and makes me think of different things--my brother when I draw people.

Duranne did her writing "when I finish work [Boardwork]. Usually I don't have time for stories and poems after math." If she could write whatever she wanted, "I'd write a story about my life."

In this interview, Duranne, like Ayrio and Bonita, felt "good" writing was neat and carefully done. One had to "concentrate on doing the right words and the right letters."

Despite her own pleasurable view of writing, when asked about adult writing, Duranne, like Bonita, highlighted every day uses of writing. Adults write "work on the board," letters, telephone messages, and scores during home basketball games. However, Duranne did note that her nursery school teacher used to read her class poems and even sent poems home with the children. Duranne in fact still had all her poems, which she kept in a book on the coffee table in her living room. In addition, Duranne's 18-year-old sister "writes a lot of stories."

In the following sections, Duranne's school writing behaviors will be described. Consistent with her interview, the observational data suggested a young writer serious about her efforts--aware of a variety of writing purposes and forms and intent on getting her own writing done when she could, between assigned tasks.

Duranne's School Writing Occasions

Duranne was observed for 23 writing events: 8 Composition events, 11 Boardwork events, and 4 Child-Initiated events. Although Duranne perceived each of these writing occasions somewhat differently, the distinction between Child-Initiated and Composition events was less clear than it had been in Ayrio's and, more so, Bonita's case. The primary distinction for Duranne was between "work" (i.e., Boardwork) and "not work" (Composition and Child-Initiated) events.

Composition. During free writing events, Duranne, like her peers, most frequently wrote about daily experiences. Like Bonita, these were centered relatively more around her family than possessions or experiences with peers. She wrote of playing with friends, dancing lessons, and family events--experiences with her baby brother and teen-age half sisters, shopping trips, her daddy's birthday, her mother's surgery. Duranne's pieces were distinctive, though, in that she included her feelings about the events in question. She did not, in fact, always follow a strictly chronological pattern; at times she introduced a topic and then commented upon it:

> This is not going to work at my house all my sisters are going to be here this weekend. And where are they going to sleep We only have two beds My mom and dad sleep in one. What should I do?
>
> My brother gets into my room all the time aI do not like it. he is 2 years old. I love my brother very very much I am 8 years old And he is very relles.

Although shopping trips did not dominate Duranne's entries, as they did Bonita's, one piece on shoes is included here as it suggests potentially significant differences between their lives. Duranne actually did get her shoes:

Yesterday I went to the mall. It was fun. We went to buy me some shoes. We bought me some Ms Pac- (Duranne's hyphen as she was at the end of a line] man shoes. I have them on today. They are very combesbel. We also bought my daddy some shoes. We had Lots of fun. I like my Ms. Pacman shoes. They are good run- [again, this is Duranne's hyphen at the end of a line] ing shoes. My daddy also likes his shoes too. I am glad I got new shoes.

Not all Duranne's free writing pieces reported personal experiences or feelings. Four of the twenty-two pieces collected during phase two were stories. This small number is misleading, though, as her stories were longer than her other pieces and, on at least one occasion, written over a two day period. The stories had titles and were about animals. Reminiscent of Bonita's child-initiated stories, the characters in Duranne's tales had money and/or food problems. Like Bonita's, her stories began with an introduction of the central character and, then, the character's problem; unlike Bonita's, the problem was always resolved, although not necessarily in a positive manner:

The Cat

One day there was a cat his name was Sammy. He went looking for food. He could not find any anywhere he said "Where could all the food have gone" Well you know where it had gone. This city he lived in desided to clean up and not through food on the ground. for they wanted to keep there city. He went to ask another cat where the food had gone. The cat said " People want to keep the city clean boy. So the cat never found any food and finaly he dided because he had no food

The End

Once apund a time there was a pup named pudd pup. He lived in puppy town. He had on a shirt with pudding all over it. He did not ware pants do you know what he wore? He wore puppy pampers. He had green puppy hair. He had a house by the puppy creak. The puppy creek was filed with pups. One day he wanted to play in the puppy creak. But the only thing was wrong he had no pup dollors. It coast a dollor to get in. The next day It said on the sign that all pups get in. free. So thats how he got in puppy creak. Everybody got out of the creak when he came do you know why! They thought he was a monster. Because he had green hair and everybody went home. So from now on he never goes to puppy creak. All he does is eat green beans and watches pup T.V.

The End

Duranne generally wrote fluently during free writing, pausing between phrases and sentences and vocalizing words occasionally. She reread during story writing but was not observed to do so during the reporting of personal experiences and feelings. In regard to mechanics, Duranne did not labor over writing conventions but did automatically use more conventional markings than did Bonita or Ayrio. She did not attend notably to her handwriting; she wrote over letters or quickly erased to adjust spellings and occasionally to alter capitalization or punctuation. She generally, but not consistently, used capitalization and periods correctly; she also made use of exclamation marks, quotation marks, hyphens, and question marks. Like Ayrio, Duranne drew lines to separate her pieces from each other. However, Duranne often wrote several short pieces on one day. Thus, while Ayrio's lines separated one day's piece from another, Duranne's separated pieces that were on different topics.

Unlike both Ayrio and Bonita, Duranne did not consistently share her work with the class. When sharing, she appeared to enjoy the experience, smiling throughout. Duranne chose pieces with humorous parts to share, and the class responded appropriately. Like Ayrio, she appeared sensitive to other children's successful (response-getting) ideas. Her "Pudd Pup" story was written the day after her peer Chris's "Tod Toad" story. Duranne's story contained an original plot and, in fact, was a more coherent, structured tale than was his. Nonetheless, she did borrow Chris's sound play idea ("Once there was a toad. Whose name was Tod. And he lived in a place called Toad Towers . . . He wore tight jeans . . . And under his tight jeans he wore toddler pampers."). Duranne did not, however, join in writing the E.T. stories, the most frequent and best-received of the story topics in her class.

Duranne evidenced audience awareness in ways other than topic selection. She used the general "you," employed techniques for linking sections of a story across time ("Part II tomorrow"), and occasionally offered explanations of potentially unclear content:

> I am very happy! Because I won a beauty contest. I am Ga. Girl Star and Ga. Girls princess. I did not win the queen but I also won Most Phonicgic. I won a chrorfy and a Tiear . . . Your might not know what a tiera is? It is sorrita like a crown.

Even though Duranne did not always share her work with the class, she appeared to enjoy her own pieces, evaluating them positively as Ayrio had done with his own. At times, she smiled while writing; she even giggled as she wrote the "Pudd Pup" piece (which she did share). Duranne wrote her story "The Pig" on two sheets of paper, composing a sentence first on one sheet and then immediately copying it onto another. The children

turned in their free writing each day for Ms. Kane to save for the next day's use, and Duranne wanted a copy of "The Pig" for herself.

Like Ayrio, Duranne was only observed once to make a change or addition to a finished paper. In this instance she had completed a story, her "Pudd Pup" tale, with "The End" and then had another thought. She erased her writing and added a bit more. Specifically, the final two sentences in the story (see p. 4-7) were added at this time ("So from now on he never goes to puppy creak. All he does is eat green beans and watches pup T.V.").

During free writing, then, Duranne, like Ayrio and Bonita, focused on conveying personal and imaginary experiences for her own pleasure and, at times, for others. She appeared most involved in her imaginary stories, writing longer pieces, smiling as she worked, and continuing pieces begun one day on the next. Her involvement and pleasure were similar to Ayrio's free writing events and Bonita's self-initiated events. Like Ayrio, Duranne evidenced sensitivity to her class's response to written texts.

Boardwork. Duranne's behavior during Boardwork was distinctly different from her behavior during Composition. As was observed in the previous second grade cases, Duranne wrote less fluently. She hesitated before beginning tasks and then paused frequently during her work in order to decide what exactly to do next.

Duranne was less confused about directions and procedures than were Bonita and Ayrio, perhaps because her boardwork was more predictable. As she herself had noted during her initial interview, the high group did a great deal of dictionary-work--"write the meaning, what page it's on, and the guide words." However, like Bonita and Ayrio, she was concerned with her performance and, in addition, with the amount of boardwork to be done. These concerns are reflected in the following excerpts from Duranne's observation sheets:

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		Duranne examines the boardwork for the day and comments to Melissa:
	IS - P	"We got 20." (sighs)
		She glances at the low group's board and comments again:
		"They got 20."
		Later, Duranne is copying words from the board, looking up their pronunciations, and then writing a sentence with each.
	OV	"Oh, she didn't make her b right." (Duranne is commenting here, to no one in particular, about the handwriting on the board. In this case, the handwriting was done by a university student [ST], who had just assumed responsibility for writing up Duranne's group's boardwork.)
bel	S	
	P	Duranne glances at the board.
o	OV	"O"
n	OV	"N"
g	OV	"G"
e	OV	"E"
d	OV	"D"
	IS - T	Duranne tells ST that she wishes to use a dictionary rather than the reading text's glossary.
		Duranne is looking through the dictionary,
	OV	"belonged, belonged--There isn't belonged."
	P	Duranne glances at the board and reads the directions,
	R	"Write the pronunciation."
		Duranne asks ST,

Continued

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	IS - T	"What's the pronunciation."
		ST tells Duranne to recall the pronunciation lessons they had had yesterday in reading. On ST's advice, Duranne looks for belonged in her reading glossary.
	OV	"It don't have no--Oh!"
b	OV	"B"
i	OV	"I"
	OV	"Oops! It's cursive."
		Duranne now copies the pronunciation, using cursive, and makes up a sentence for the word: This belonged to me.
This	OV	"This
belonged	OV	belonged
to	OV	to
me	OV	me"
18	OV	"18"
	P	Duranne glances at the next word on the board, bore.
	OV	"I am bored" (says as though reading this sentence)
		Duranne finds and copies the pronunciation of bore (bor). She then comments to no one in particular,
	OV	"That's what it sounds like. It don't sound like it has an e on it."
		Duranne now composes her sentence,
	OV	"bore--You bore."
You bore	S	

Continued

Child's Text	Code	Notes
19	OV	"19"
		Duranne is concerned about the legibility of her handwriting and comments to ST,
	IS - T	"Can you read this? It's not writing dark."
	R	Duranne now reads the next word, cork, and
cork	S	begins to write it.
	P	Duranne locates the word in the glossary and copies the pronunciation,
	OV	"K-O"
ko	S	
	OV	"R-K"
rk	OV	"R-K"
	OV	"That ain't how you spell cork."
		Duranne now plans her sentence,
	OV	"cork-Where's the cork?"
		After writing this sentence, she turns to her peer, Melanie,
	IS - P	"You know what I'm on? 20. I'm on 20. I don't believe it."

KEY: Dialogue: IS - P - Interruption Solicited from Peer; IS - T - Interruption Solicited from Teacher; Monologue: OV - Overt Language; Other: R - Read; S - Silence; P - Pause.

As the preceding excerpt suggests, Duranne was concerned with her performance ("Opps, it's cursive"). However, as the excerpt also suggests, she was aware that others make mistakes too and that, in fact, even books

might be wrong. Duranne was unclear about the role of the "pronunciation" key in glossaries and dictionaries. She noted that the book often "ain't right," although it may be more logical. The conflicting spellings provided by "the board" and the reference books may have accounted for her remark, upon failing to locate meter in the dictionary, that perhaps meteor, which she had located, might be the same word. As she tried to get her teacher's attention, a peer helped her to locate meter, help she readily accepted.

Duranne's awareness of others' limitations as well as her own was also reflected in her attitude toward mechanics. Like Bonita and Ayrio, Duranne focused on mechanics during Boardwork, although less intently than they did. Like Ayrio, her major concern in this area was handwriting. However, while she attended to her own errors ("Made a g instead of a d"), she also attended to those of others. The perceding excerpt illustrated her critiquing of ST's handwriting ("Oh, she didn't make her b right"); she even questioned her teacher's handwriting ("Ms. Kane, is this an i?"). If she happened to notice a peer's error, for example, when leaning over another's desk to exchange a comment, she remarked upon it matter-of-factly.

Not only was Duranne aware of others' limitations as well as her own, she also did not hesitate to ask questions when confused, a behavior not noted in Bonita or Ayrio. Duranne was not observed to ask her peers for advice, although they offered her suggestions; she did frequently ask her teacher or ST for help. Duranne would note a difficulty or confusion and comment on her problem, to herself as much as to anyone else, or direct a question to the teacher or ST if one was available. Both Ms. Kane and ST typically responded by directing Duranne to try a bit harder, but the peers surrounding her (Melanie, John, Chris) often offered very specific help:

Duranne has been searching for mettle and remarks that she cannot find it. John comments, "I just had mettle. Where'd it go? It's on p. _____."

Duranne's primary concern during Boardwork, then, like Bonita's and Ayrio's, was to finish. She remained on task, as Bonita did, without the "breaks" so evident in Ayrio's case. Duranne's peers remained on task as well and offered her support now and then, particularly when help was not forthcoming from the teacher. She attended intermittently to mechanics, particularly handwriting.

As with Ayrio and Bonita, Duranne gave minimal attention to the meaning of her copied words and sentences. When assigned to compose sentences with given words, she wrote simple impersonal ones: Where's the cork? Where's the zoo keeper? Where are the models? I disproved. I am fierce. It dwindled outside.

Like Bonita and Ayrio, Duranne did make personal statements from time to time, particularly when she happened upon words in the dictionary that related to her own life; for example, upon noting the word half-sister, she commented, "Half-sister, I've got a lot o' them"; memory led to the observation that her own was not good. In addition, Duranne commented at times about the words she was searching for: "Loll is a strange word", "What does that [mettle] mean?".

In sum, then, Duranne was less concerned with meaning during Boardwork than she was during Composition. Her major goal was to complete the tasks--and complete them reasonably accurately and neatly.

Child-Initiated occasions. Like Ayrio and Bonita, after finishing her work Duranne drew and, also, engaged in a variety of writing tasks.

She wrote poems and stories, and letters to her parents, sisters, and boyfriend; she constructed a board game and made a "password" device. The latter was a piece of paper taped to a ruler, thereby forming a flag; on the flag was written:

(front)

Please say Password. It is

Toy!

Please push button

(children's names listed here)

(back)

Please say Password. It is
Please!

Please push button

When the teacher was facing the front of the room and a child came by Duranne, the password device might be used. Duranne would stick it out to block the child's passage until the appropriate word was spoken and the required action completed.

As with Bonita and Ayrio, the Child-Initiated writing served a variety of functions. During Boardwork, Duranne wrote to complete her work successfully; during Composition, to report her personal experiences and to create imaginary ones for herself and, at times, for her peers as well; during Child-Initiated writing she wrote again to create imaginary experiences but also to interact with significant others, to imitate adult role models, to create games, and to produce particular literary forms.

Most of Duranne's Child-Initiated events, like Bonita's, involved

extended text. In her purse, Duranne carried the latest letter from her half-sister in Florida, to which she would reply. She felt obligated to create cards for her relatives on their birthdays. And she also knew the etiquette of thank you notes:

Dear Brian [her boyfriend]

Thank you for the earings.

I did not observe Duranne compose her personal letters, as it seemed unethical to do so. I did, however, observe the writing of three poems. As Duranne had indicated in her opening interview, drawing and writing poems were major free time activities for her.

During the writing of each poem, Duranne concentrated on meaning, as she had during the Composition events, and, again as in previous events, she had a sense of the form or pattern within which she was working. Her sense of poetry's form and content appeared to come from the nursery school poems and a children's poetry book she owned; she reported copying poems from both of these sources. Here is one of Duranne's copied poems, which can be compared to her original creations:

Ice

When it is the winter
time I run up the street
And I make the ice laugh.
With my little feet-----
Cricke, Crackle, crickle
Creet, creet, crrreeet.

In choosing topics for poems, Duranne was often influenced by her weekly morning art class. On the day she had drawn rain dropping on flowers, she wrote:

The Storm

by myself

One drop, two drops, three drops

four drops on the roof they go

tickel, tickel, prickel, fickel

The wind goes swaing up and down

The flowers then reminded her of springtime, so she wrote:

spring days are very fun for

children my age. We swish

through the tall green grass.

with shorts and no shoes. It's fun

on spring days.

A comparison of Duranne's topics, word choice, and style with those of her copied poems suggests that Duranne freely built on ideas from those sources, just as she freely incorporated the ideas of other children into her free writing pieces.

During the actual writing, Duranne reread frequently, as she had during Composition events involving story writing. She both revised (made meaning changes) and edited (made mechanics, particularly spelling, changes) as she proceeded. Unlike her behavior during Composition events, changes were always made by writing over or crossing out--never by erasing. The changes suggested that Duranne monitored and evaluated her writing and that the fluent production of meaning was primary here. To illustrate, the following summarizes her production of "Splashing in the Water":

Duranne quickly writes the first line:

Swish swash goes the water below

Duranne then rereads the line aloud and begins a new one:

in the

She pauses and then adds:

warm winter

Duranne pauses again and then comments in an exasperated manner, "Warm winter, golly." She crosses out winter and underneath it writes:

summer water.

Duranne rereads the piece and comments, "That's a short one."

The planning and commenting about her work here were very similar to that engaged in by Bonita during Child-Initiated story writing--like Bonita, Duranne was clearly pleased with her efforts and reread her productions. Duranne, however, made changes while rereading during the first draft, as opposed to during the rereading of a completed draft, as Bonita had done. For both, however, a certain security in knowing what was expected to be done (i.e., knowing how to do a story, a poem), an evaluative stance toward meeting that standard, and pleasure in accomplishment created a tension that appeared to lead to sustained, self-critical, but positive involvement. To a lesser extent, this self-motivated, self-evaluative involvement had been seen in Ayrio's production of the "King Sirlancealot" piece.

As with both Ayrio and Bonita, Duranne's self-initiated writing generated the interest of her peers. Melanie joined Duranne in writing letters to their respective boyfriends. Duranne's password device was admired by the children sitting around her. On a day when she was absent, Shea, who sat beside her, took it from Duranne's desk and used it herself; Shea also explained, on that same day, that a child-made envelope on Duranne's desk contained Duranne's poems. An interesting contrast with Bonita was revealed when a child from the low group, Kori, approached Duranne and expressed an interest

in writing poems too. Recall that Kori had in fact approached Bonita as she was working on her stories and that Bonita had invited Kori to write with her. Duranne, however, did not respond to Kori's two requests, one made while I was observing ("Can I do it?") and the other after I had left ("Will you help me write poems?"). Duranne did not say "no"; she simply said nothing, keeping her head focused on her paper. There are a variety of possible reasons for Duranne's response, including an unwillingness to "teach" and an unwillingness to associate with a child from the low group. I did not pursue this with Duranne due to an uncertainty as to how to avoid taking an adult role ("Why didn't you help Kori?") and, also, due to Duranne's allowing no "conversational in" here; she was utterly silent on this issue.

Duranne's final interview. As with the other case studies, during the last week of data collection, Duranne was asked to evaluate varied of her writing samples. She was also questioned about her interest in and perception of the reasons for writing.

To my query, "Is this good writing?" about her free writing samples, Duranne shyly answered, "a little." Her story "The Frog" which was written in two parts on two separate days, was good because--

> "When you get--in the first place--if you just go on, it don't make it that good. Cause some people like to find out the next day what's happening--what's going to happen. And I think that makes people happier and it surprises them . . .

Pleasing people was an important evaluative criterion for her stories. She could tell that the class liked her stories because "they smile and laugh at some of it." Of all three children, then, Duranne was the only one to explicitly identify audience reaction as a criterion for "good"

writing. Her selection of humorous pieces to share during free writing events, then, appeared to be deliberate.

Similarly to Bonita, Duranne stated that pieces reporting personal experiences were good because they were "real and it's something that you done."

Duranne reported that her free writing papers were for the class, but:

Dyson: Is it important to you to read your writing to the class?

Duranne: Not that much.

Dyson: Not that much.

Duranne: But a little.

Dyson: But a little. Who will you surprise with it [your story] then, just anybody?

Duranne: My mom and dad.

During free writing, Duranne reported a concern with the content of her pieces. During Boardwork, again like Bonita, Duranne reported a concern with "thinking" and not "being sloppy":

> You have to get--you have to put your mind to your work and not stories or nothing.

The Boardwork products evaluated included a copying-and-editing task, a copying-and-analyzing-words task, two copying/alphabetizing words tasks, a composing-sentences-for-words task, and a fill-in-the-blank task; for these, Duranne explained, the important thing was "to try," and trying was reflected in neatness and accuracy. Her emphasis on trying complemented my inference, based on observations, that Duranne was aware of and comfortable with, her own limitations:

> If you get it wrong it doesn't matter because you tried and you've tried a lot . . . But if you don't try and you just make it sloppy and all that, you just can't do it right.

It won't be right, cause--

Dyson: If it's right--what does that mean?

Duranne: It means that it's not got any, any mistakes or something like that. Or the letters are wrong. Or like if your accent is wrong, or something like that . . . [If it's good] you followed the directions and did the right thing.

While free writing pieces were for the class, Boardwork was for Ms. Kane.

Finally, I asked Duranne about a poem she had written and, also, about the other self-initiated writing she did during the course of the day. She evidenced a conception of the forms of stories and poems, again complementing the inferences I had made based on observation. The poem, she noted, was "good--

> compared to a--a poem, not a story. But if it's a story you'd have uh much more and it wouldn't stop right there and just go on and on . . . [A poem] 's like a story, but you don't think like--like you don't think of a page, you just think about that much or how little you want it--and you just think of little things and rhyme 'em.

Stories, being longer, could be gone back to later and added to:

> And then sometimes I just--like if--if I ended 'em, I can erase some of the ending, mark it out, and make more of it and go on--take turns . . . and then whenever I wanted to stop, I would just put that same ending back on.

Child-initiated poems and stories, like free writing pieces, were evaluated for their content. Her poem about her little brother was good because--

it's got a lot of things in it and it just makes you think of a lot of things--like your brother or sister, whatever.

The quality of Child-initiated writing was not as explicitly connected to audience-reaction as was free writing, but Duranne did refer to the effect her piece would have on a general "you" and also reported that these pieces were shared with her mom and dad, who sometimes told her if they were "good."

Duranne explained that, if she had paper, writing stories and poems at home was easier than writing them at school because "you don't have that much noise and you think better. You don't have your head on something else--like your this or that or--I mean you have your head on your writing. Silent." As noted in her initial interview, if Duranne could not get her writing done at school, she did it at home. "Toward the end of the year," she noted, "it [boardwork] gets a lot and you can't do that much on writing."

As previously noted, Duranne reported that her mom and dad read all her writing and that her grandmother put her work up in her home: "My grandmother wants me to be a writer when I'm big."

In this final interview, as opposed to the initial one, Duranne noted that adults write for aesthetic and pleasurable reasons, as Ayrio had, as well as for daily functional purposes, as Bonita had:

> Adults write like books--you know, books for people to read like them little bitty books they want kids to read--stuff like Alexander and the Terrible--I mean, the Horrible . . . They can make books like spelling books and stuff. And like--

you know them people that are blind? They make them kind of books.

Dyson: Do your mom and dad write?

Duranne: My mom writes a little bit.

Dyson: What kind of things?

Duranne: She writes letters and sometimes she helps me with poems and stuff like that. One day I wrote a story--it was two pages so that--I can't figure out what I did with it. I think my mother gave it to my grandmother to put it up.

Dyson: Does your dad write?

Duranne: Not very much. He's working on his race car.

Summary

Like the other second graders examined, Duranne's behaviors varied across writing occasion types and suggested relationships between features of literacy events and writing behaviors. Like Ayrio, Duranne appeared more sensitive to her audience's responses to specific aspects of her written text than was Bonita. More so than Ayrio though, Duranne suggested through her behaviors and through her own comments that out-of-classroom experiences provided the major social network within which she wrote.

In Composition events, Duranne, like her closely observed peers, focused on her evolving meaning. During free writing, she produced a greater variety of forms than did Ayrio and Bonita: chronological reports of recent events, brief essays on her feelings and problems, and imaginative stories; with the exception of the stories, her writing generally focused on experiences with her family. Duranne did share control of

free writing events with her teacher, who had established the basic format of the event and suggested a possible form and content; nonetheless, she varied more often than did Bonita or Ayrio from the initial suggestions of the teacher.

Like Ayrio, Duranne seemed sensitive to the responses of her peers to specific aspects of her written text; in this sense, her peers served as informal evaluators of her work. Unlike Ayrio, though, she appeared to view the entire "class" as her audience, rather than a select group of peers. Duranne adapted writing ideas from others, addressed her audience directly ("you"), and selected pieces to share with the class that she enjoyed and that she anticipated they would too. Duranne was more verbally reflective about her efforts to please her audience than were Bonita or Ayrio. Duranne reported sharing her free writing pieces with her parents as well as with the class.

In Boardwork events, Duranne's concerns were to finish her work accurately and neatly, thereby pleasing her teacher, the controller of Boardwork's form and content, its audience, and its evaluator. Perhaps since her work was more predictable, Duranne appeared less confused about directions and procedures than had Bonita and Ayrio. But, like them, she was concerned with her performance and with the amount of work to be done, as evidenced by her self-monitoring and self-evaluative language. Mechanics, particularly cursive writing, also received attention during Boardwork, a concern no doubt related to her teacher's evaluative standards.

Duranne was distinctive in her apparent comfortableness with her own limitations. She asked questions when confused and commented on others' (including her teacher's) errors, as well as her own. As she noted, the

important thing during Boardwork was to "try." Duranne's peers offered her suggestions when she indicated a need for help. Her peers then, may have supported Duranne's on-task efforts, while Ayrio's appeared to distract him.

As with Bonita and Ayrio, Child-Initiated writing events introduced new forms and purposes as Duranne took full control of these events. She produced not only stories and poems, but also letters and other graphic objects. New purposes emerged too as Duranne wrote to imitate adult role models, to create games, to interact with others, and to create imaginary experiences and particular literary forms.

Like Bonita, Duranne produced primarily extended texts. She evidenced both pleasure in her efforts and an evaluative stance toward her products. These behaviors were evident to a lesser degree during free writing, particularly during story writing, but were most notable during poetry writing, a form Duranne did not use during free writing. Duranne engaged in extensive self-monitoring and self-evaluative behavior during poetry writing, perhaps because her conception of poetry forms was particularly well-defined, as she modeled her efforts after known poems. As with Bonita's stories, poems provided Duranne with a sure sense of what she was about and this apparently contributed to positive, self-evaluative involvement.

While peers were the major audience for free writing, her family served as the primary audience for her poems and other self-initiated writing. Both, however, were writing done for others' pleasure and were, by Duranne's own admission, different from boardwork writing--"work"--which was done for the teacher to evaluate.

Most notable in Duranne's case was the pervasiveness of unofficial writing in her daily life--writing was one of the things she needed to accomplish for herself and for significant others. The observational data indicated the consistency with which Duranne wrote and the variety of purposes and forms her writing took. She herself commented on the difficulty of getting all her writing done in school, particularly during the end of the year when boardwork increased. At times Duranne needed to write at home when she couldn't finish her writing in school. Duranne's seriousness about writing was reflected in the care with which she stored her products--a bag for her letters that was always kept in her purse and an envelope and, later, a special small notebook for her poems.

In sum, Duranne's behavior provides further support for considering the social contexts in which writing is embedded during discussions of children's writing abilities and, concomitantly, the school's effectiveness at writing instruction. Duranne's writing behaviors varied depending on such features as topic, form, and perceived audiences and evaluators. In addition, her sense of writing's importance and her incorporation of it into her daily life were the result of prior writing experiences and the continuing support of her family. The social context of school is embedded in that of the home, the one providing the major support for Duranne's "writing" (as opposed to her "work").

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOOL WRITING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

School Writing in the Primary Grades:
Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the development of young children's concepts about writing as reflected in their school writing behaviors. The research questions concerned variations in children's behaviors across school writing occasions. I, therefore, identified the range of classroom situations in which child writing occurred and then observed across that range, focusing on the behaviors of six case study children, three kindergarteners and three second graders.

Previous chapters have illustrated the nature of classroom writing occasions and children's behaviors across those occasions. As discussed in chapter 1 of Volume 1, the limitations of the data are acknowledged and the need for similar work in other types of classrooms recognized. The data collected supported the following broad statements or conclusions about these children's development as writers in school.

First, school writing was not achieved simply through tasks designed to reach objectives, but through social activities, that is, through literacy occasions or events. Literacy events are related to Hymes (1972) concept of speech events, occasions structured by ways of using speech. Literacy events are activities engaged in by one or more persons that are centered around reading or writing (Teale, Estrada, & Anderson, 1980) and that are also governed by social rules about how participants use speech during the activity (Heath, 1983). Literacy events, then, involve senders and receivers of messages, who are motivated by goals, characterized by moods, and guided by interactional norms.

Even though, to an outside observer, one literacy event is occurring, varied events may in fact be occurring simultaneously. In school, then, the

teacher may be orchestrating one event in one setting, but individual students may have differing goals, tones, or interaction norms. These differences exist because children, like teachers, are individuals with mental, emotional, social, and cultural lives. The possibility of simultaneous literacy events accounts for the gap between children's and teacher's interpretations of school writing tasks, a gap evident in both the kindergarten and second grade data.

Second, school tasks centered in the school world were often interpreted by young children in personally meaningful ways. Literacy begins as children learn about the purposes, processes, and specific features of written language as they encounter it within familiar settings. They try out writing on their own as well and may offer their products to others as gifts, much as they offer their drawings (Dyson, 1982; Taylor, 1983). But learning to write in school may mean learning to perform writing tasks that are centered in the school world and directed toward developing prescribed literacy skills. Children may copy rows of letter p's, for example, and statements like "Today is Monday. It is sunny today." In these tasks the child as individual does not share in the control of writing's form and content, nor does the teacher function so much as a recipient but as an evaluator of writing. However, the impersonalness of school writing is not necessarily immediately obvious to children.

The observed kindergarteners, in fact, were not always successful at separating personal intentions and given instructions. For example, near the end of the study I talked to all three children about their written products, including those in which they had printed individual letters, such as rows of p's, copied words and sentences from the board, and filled in the blanks of copied sentences with selected optional words. Although

all products were handed in to their teacher, when I asked whom the papers were for, each child in turn smiled shyly and designated specific papers for significant others: "This one's for my mommy. This one's for my daddy. This one's for you." They had all worked hard on their papers and apparently conceived of them as things that could be given to others for their pleasure.

The second graders, however, were well attuned to the world of the school. Personal meanings did not weave their way into their boardwork tasks. Even tasks intended as meaningful, such as composing sentences for spelling words, often resulted in patterned sentences, such as Duranne's "Where's the cork? Where's the zookeeper? Where's the model?". Certainly, during the interviews, none of the second graders offered me their boardwork samples as gestures of affection and friendship. They understood that boardwork and other official assignments were for their teacher.

Third, to carry out school writing tasks, both kindergarteners and second graders appeared to look for patterns in the entire procedure by which particular products were made. If a child could not grasp the underlying logic of a task, he or she was, by default, dependent on observing the physical unfolding of the task. The comments of these four kindergarteners, sitting together while copying words from the board, illustrate children's sensitivity to following procedures or rules:

"I ain't even messed up yet," brags Wayne.

"Me neither," rejoins Callie.

"I seen you erase," Wayne counters.

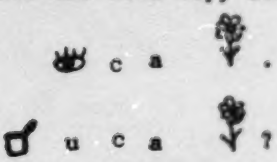
"I never mess up," says Craig.

"Me neither," chorusses Callie.

"Me neither," says Joseph.

Evaluative comments directed toward self are not uncommon among children even when they are engaged in self-initiated writing. Here, though, it is clear that the evaluation is based on a commonly accepted group standard set by their teacher. There are rules about not erasing and thereby ripping or smudging one's paper, and the children are concerned about following these rules.

The children's sensitivity to the event structure for varied tasks--to the actions necessary to complete each successfully--assumed an importance beyond that intended by the teacher. Many activities earnestly done by the children went awry. The rebus writing events in the kindergarten provided a clear example. From the teacher's point of view, rebus writing made it easier for the children to express themselves than did the conventional writing, as rebus allows the use of pictures and single letters to represent words. Before asking the children to write rebus sentences on their own, the teacher had them copy sentences such as:



When the children were no longer asked to copy but rather to write whatever they wished, all continued to follow this pattern. Dexter, who did not understand the precise connection between letters and sounds, included pictures of eyes and cans in his rebus products, even though he did not necessarily include the words I or can in his final reading. He knew that those graphics were necessary for "that rebus writing."

This pattern-seeking was evident in the second grade as well. Like the older children doing inauthentic writing described by Edelsky and Smith (1984), the second graders worked primarily to avoid "messing up," to figure

out the patterns in the ways literacy tasks were to be completed: "How do you do this? Are you on number 8 yet? Is this right?" The children knew that school tasks must be interpreted in relation to the teacher's, rather than their own, intentions, and they were attuned to her desires.

At the same time that the second graders were attuned to the teacher's expectations in the official literacy curriculum, they appeared to be taking control of writing in the unofficial writing curriculum, which was similar in many ways to that described by Fiering (1981) in two fifth grade classrooms. The fourth conclusion then is that by the second grade writing appeared embedded within the social lives of the children. A distinguishing feature of the unofficial curriculum was that it frequently involved the children making written objects for others, a finding that replicates that of Florio and Clark (1982) in a second/third grade and Fiering in the fifth grades. The children made letters to parents, labeled pictures for their teacher, and constructed written objects to put on display for their peers. To emphasize this point, although second graders did not offer me official written products as gifts, as the kindergarteners did, they did offer self-initiated products in which the medium rather than the text was the message--they gave me papers on which they had copied stories from books or made cursive writing loops.

There was no hint of such an underground writing curriculum in the kindergarten. Certainly one would expect second graders to be more skillful writers and more aware of writing functions. But perhaps there are other factors operating here as well. Second graders, unlike kindergarteners, had access to pencils and paper--all writing materials were not controlled by the teacher. In addition, the second graders had time to themselves at their seats when their independent work was done; the kindergarteners went to a

center activity when their independent work was done, and none of the centers contained writing materials that could be used in unstructured ways.

Broader, developmental factors may be operating here too. By the second grade, as opposed to the kindergarten, friendship patterns are more stable (Cooper, Marquis, & Ayers-Lopez, 1982; Rubin, 1980). Within the network of peer relations, writing served practical purposes, such as writing notes and jotting down phone numbers. It also served more playful purposes, such as to imitate adult role models and to participate in the children's own "subculture" (Bauman, 1982): the children made desk placards, small paper trash bins to tape to the sides of their desks, games, and so on. In addition, as Duranne explained, unofficial writing served to keep one busy:

> I was bored when I finished my work, and I talked and got into trouble. So I started writing poems and then thought about writing stories.

Like others, Duranne did her writing "after I finish work . . . Toward the end of the year, it [boardwork] gets a lot and you can't do that much on writing." So, when their "work" was done, the children wrote letters, jotted down phone numbers, made lists of good kids and bad kids, constructed objects, wrote stories and poems, and so on.

The free writing events, which included an oral sharing phase, allowed the children's social lives within the classroom to permeate an official writing occasion. The three closely observed second graders appeared to interpret the free writing occasion differently; specifically, they adopted differing stances or roles toward their peers. Bonita appeared to strive for a positive presentation of self, Ayrio, for social interaction with his

friends, Duranne, for an entertaining performance. The fifth conclusion, then, is that the children's relationships with each other appeared to affect individual children's writing behaviors in free writing events--their decisions about what to do to be successful.

To elaborate, Bonita, Ayrio, and Duranne presented particular aspects of themselves during free writing events. The teacher, however, had one frame, which she viewed as a developmental one and through which she viewed the children as writers. Viewing writing exclusively as a developmental process occurring within the child, rather than as also a social process occurring in response to particular situations, can lead to inaccurate views of children's competence. In the present study, for example, Bonita seemed unable to write imaginatively--an inaccurate assumption.

This overview of the study's conclusions suggests the following conception of learning to write in school: Writing begins as children learn about the purposes, processes, and specific features of written language as they encounter it within familiar settings in their homes and communities. This process continues in school as children look for patterns in the way literacy tasks are to be conducted. However, school tasks are centered in the school world and are frequently directed toward developing prescribed literacy skills. These tasks may not make "common sense" to children, as the kindergarteners especially demonstrated. Seeking to learn to perform effectively in school literacy tasks may lead children away from the major historical and social value of writing--to accomplish necessary personal and social goals. Rather, children may simply become good at the school game, resulting in writing that demonstrates language skills but little content. Children may, however, exercise control over writing that occurs between the cracks of the school curriculum. That is, they may bring their

own uses for writing into the classroom, finding time between assignments to engage in writing that is meaningful in their own worlds.

Implications for Research

This study's conclusions highlight the social nature of school writing tasks. They suggest the necessity of examining how young children with differing understandings of written language and from differing literacy backgrounds construe varying social contexts for writing. Investigators might focus on such child-perceived features as expected topics and forms, anticipated audiences, and perceived evaluators and standards. Through examining children's varied responses in different classroom contexts, researchers should be able collaboratively to describe qualities of classroom environments that appear to foster particular writing behaviors--qualities that might apply equally well to classrooms using different instructional techniques that suit variations in teachers and children.

For example, an instructional goal may be to encourage reflectiveness on the content of one's text, a stance suggested in children by their rereading and changing of their writing. In free writing events, Ayrio and Duranne appeared at times to reconsider their texts' content, Ayrio when he was unsure of a written fact, Duranne when attempting to construct a story; both children appeared sensitive to their peers' responses to their written texts. Bonita engaged in similar behaviors when producing self-initiated stories that were actually read, as opposed to listened to, by a small number of peers. This situation seemed to focus her attention relatively more on her text, as opposed to her presentation of self.

The free writing events also highlighted how children's relationships with each other could influence their writing behaviors. In seeking

to understand how children's interactions with others influence literacy growth, researchers have focused quite logically on adult-child interactions (e.g., Teale, 1982; Cochran-Smith, 1984). The child's social environment, though, includes not only parents and teachers, but also peers, who assume an increasingly important role during the school years (Labov, 1982). Recognizing and examining the existence of the child's social world and writing's place within it might assist educators in designing school environments that would allow children's concerns and teachers' concerns to more confortably mesh.

In this regard, investigations of peer response groups that focus also on peer social networks within the classroom might allow educators to gain distance from an undeniably valuable instructional technique--allowing children to "express themselves" and to share their efforts with others--and to plan possible variations on this activity to suit differences in children.

Practical Implications

As others have noted, homes are not schools (Schickedanz and Sullivan 1984). Instructional suggestions must be compatible with the nature of the school as an institution that partitions off one adult with 20, 30, or more children and then holds that adult responsible for the children's academic growth. How does a teacher create beneficial contexts for literacy development?

The findings of this study suggest that a helpful perspective may be to consider literacy an activity, a tool, rather than a set of skills. Certainly varied skills are involved in reading and writing, but these skills are only meaningful to the extent that they are organized within a purposeful activity. Further, no matter what the particular instructional

objectives in specific lessons, children do not focus solely on objectives, but on lessons as activities--as whole experiences--which include materials to be used, a series of actions to be followed, and a way of talking during and about the activity.

Edelsky, Draper, and Smith (1983, p. 273) describe a sixth grade curriculum that appears to take advantage of children's focus on whole activities. In their words, "Routines for working through whole processes were also deliberately included as part of the planned curriculum--routines for writing projects, literature study, conferencing procedures, science experiments, and so forth. However, the teacher did not break the routines into steps and make each an 'objective.' Instead the curriculum was organized so that students...had cues about a way of working from being engaged with the whole routine or process." Such cues might be found in the materials provided (e.g., written directions) or in children's observations and interactions with each other and their teacher as they worked together to accomplish tasks.

Another helpful perspective for reflecting on literacy activities planned for children is to conceive of the classroom as a community, one with its own values, shared responsibilities, and evolving history (Florio and Clark, 1982). The literature is replete with examples of activities that serve legitimate personal and social purposes within the classroom community. For example, classroom postal systems can foster interaction with class members and between the class as a whole and the wider community (Florio, 1979). Personal narratives and informational pieces allow children to share their experiences and knowledge with others (Graves, 1983). Journals can foster a variety of purposes, from expressing personal opinions and feelings to interacting in a

satisfying way with one's teacher (Milz, 1980; Staton, 1980). Lists, notes, outlines, signs, and such can serve a variety of purposes in all content areas (Edelsky and Smith, 1984).

The findings of this study caution, though, that individual members of the classroom community are also members of a constellation of groups both within and outside the classroom. These concurrent group memberships may permeate the boundaries of any school writing task. There is, then, no guarantee that all children will interpret tasks in identical ways. Within any one activity, individual children may be writing for different purposes and audiences, with different moods, and, therefore, have differing resulting messages. Critical observation, which was the basic research tool of this study, is also, therefore, a basic teaching tool. Observing children in varied writing contexts is necessary in order to make decisions about beneficial writing contexts for individual children.

In particular, decisions about the structuring of opportunities for children to share their work should be based on a consideration of both the teacher's specific goals and individual children's responses to groups of varying sizes and compositions and with differing roles (e.g., readers vs. listeners). Groups that provide some children with opportunities to develop specific writing techniques may provide others with opportunities to save face.

Finally, this study's findings suggest that teachers acknowledge that children have their own reasons for writing, although their uses may differ from the writing stressed in school. Teachers might talk to children about their own (children's) uses for writing (not just their parents' uses), provide children with access to the time and materials necessary for their writing needs, and model varied uses throughout the

day. These strategies might assist children in perceiving themselves as competent communicators already and thereby sustain their desire to expand and refine their skill.

In sum, the activities that take place in classroom contexts should increase children's awareness of and control over written language's power. The danger exists, though, that school literacy tasks will increase children's sensitivity to accomplishing the teacher's intentions rather than their own. We will have to think critically, then, about how our classrooms help children assume rather than lose control over literacy in their lives.

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